2024

COMPASS NOW

NAVIGATING TOWARD STRONGER COMMUNITIES

ADVOCATE · VOLUNTEER · LIVE UNITED · GIVE

How is your community faring?

Buffalo | Houston | La Crosse | Monroe | Trempealeau | Vernon

Published June 13, 2024

Acknowledgments

List of Organizations that Participated in Community Stakeholder Meetings

Stakeholder Meetings were held in each of the six counties covered by the Compass Now 2024 Report. 177 individuals from 84 different organizations attended. They are listed below:

ABLE, Inc.
Allina Health
Arcadia Public Library
Ashley Wellness Center
Blair-Taylor School District
Boys and Girls Clubs of Greater La Crosse
Buffalo County
Buffalo County Board
Buffalo County Emergency Management
Buffalo County Health Department
Buffalo County Sheriff's Department
Caledonia School District
Campbell Family Group Home
CASA for Kids, Inc.
Chileda
City of Caledonia
City of La Crosse – Fire Department
City of Mondovi
Coulee Recovery Center
Couleecap, Inc.
Family and Children's Center
First National Bank & Trust Company
Gale-Ettrick-Trempealeau School District
Gateway Area Council, Boy Scouts of America
Great Rivers 211
Great Rivers United Way
Gundersen Health System
Gundersen St. Joseph's Hospital & Clinics
Gundersen Tri-County Hospital & Clinics
Hillsboro City Council
Hope Floats
Hope4U
Houston County Commissioners
Houston County Public Health
Hunger Task Force
Immanuel Lutheran Church
Independence School District
La Crosse Area Family YMCA
La Crosse County Administration,
       Economic & Community Development
La Crosse County Board
La Crosse County Health Department
La Crosse County Human Services
La Crosse Medical Health Science Consortium

LeaderEthics
Mayo Clinic Health System
Minnesota Department of Health
Monroe County Child Support
Monroe County Health Department
Monroe County Human Services
Next Steps for Change
ODCorp
Outdoor Recreation Alliance
Planned Parenthood of Wisconsin
Scenic Bluffs Community Health Centers
Scenic Rivers AHEC
School District of Hillsboro
School District of Holmen
School District of La Crosse
School District of Mondovi
School District of Onalaska
Second Harvest Food Pantry
SEMCAC
St. Clare Health Mission
State of Wisconsin DHS
The Nature Place
The Parenting Place
The Salvation Army
Together with Veterans
Tomah Area School District
Tomah Health
Trempealeau County
Trempealeau County Health Department
University of Wisconsin – La Crosse
UW-Madison Extension – Monroe County
UW-Madison Extension – Vernon County
Vernon County Health Department
Vernon County Over 50
Vernon Memorial Healthcare
Viroqua Area Schools
Viroqua Variety
Viterbo University
Western Dairyland Head Start
Whitehall Area Chamber of Commerce
Winona State University Department of Nursing

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List of Exhibits

Introduction

Compass Now is a joint effort of Great Rivers United Way, area healthcare organizations, and county health departments to improve the quality of life for everyone in the community. This introductory section describes the purpose and additional context for the study. Sections 2-8 present the study results.

Purpose of the Study

This report is the latest in a series of Compass Now needs assessments and reports published since 1995. In response to these reports, Great Rivers United Way has focused its funding system to more closely reflect identified community needs. In addition, a wide array of community organizations have used report findings to shape their own priorities and support grant requests.

The purpose of this Compass Now 2024 report is to provide an updated assessment of community needs that can be used to inform community action strategies by stakeholders across the region. As illustrated in **Exhibit 1.1,** the Compass Now 2024 study is focused on communities within a six-county region including Buffalo, La Crosse, Monroe, Trempealeau, and Vernon counties in Wisconsin, and Houston County in Minnesota. A set of supplemental reports providing more detailed insight about each county is available from the Great Rivers United Way website.
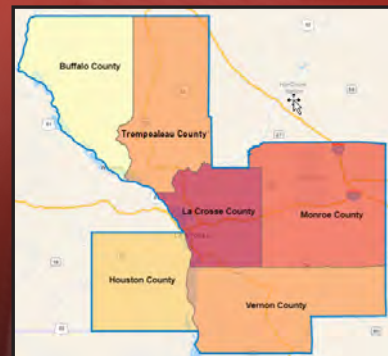
2023 Population Estimate

Buffalo	13,234
Houston	18,813
La Crosse	122,678
Monroe	46,577
Trempealeau	31,170
Vernon	30,994
Region	**263,466**

Exhibit 1.1 - The Study Region. Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of data from ESRI using ArcGIS Business Software.

United Way

Great Rivers United Way

If you find the contents of this report useful, please consider supporting our work by making a financial contribution at www.compassnow.org.

Study Methods and Data Sources

The study was conducted under the direction of Great Rivers United Way, with technical support from a contracted consultant (Community Health Solutions). The study was guided by a Compass Now Steering Committee comprised of stakeholders from public health, health care, and other community sectors. The Steering Committee members provided guidance on the study scope and methods, and also provided liaisons to engage community organizations in promoting participation in the community survey conducted for the study.

The study methods included analysis of community indicators from various sources, plus insights from community members as collected through a community survey and a series of community insight events. The study methods are summarized below, with more details provided in Appendix A.

Community Indicators

Community Demographics

A community demographic profile can provide insight about the size and distribution of the population in terms of health-sensitive attributes such as age, sex/gender, race, ethnicity, and income. Community demographics were analyzed and mapped using data and software from ESRI, a commercial provider of community data.

County Health Rankings

The County Health Rankings & Roadmaps (CHR&R) program is a collaboration between the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute. The goal of CHR&R is to bring actionable data, evidence, guidance, and stories to diverse leaders and residents so people and communities can be healthier. The University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute created CHR&R for communities across the nation, with funding from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

As illustrated in **Exhibit 1.2,** the County Health Rankings are based on a model of community health that emphasizes the many factors that influence how long and how well we live. The Rankings use more than 30 measures that help communities understand how healthy their residents are today (health outcomes) and what will impact their health in the future (health factors).

Additional Community Indicators

Indicators from the County Health Rankings are supplemented with additional indicators from sources in the local region. The indicators are provided in several sections of the report, along with notes on specific data sources These supplemental indicators include:

- Leading causes of death
- Maternal and infant health indicators
- Youth risk indicators
- Child services cases
- 211 assistance calls
- Asset-Limited, Income-Constrained, Employed (ALICE) households

The County Health Rankings Model

Exhibit 1.2 - Source: University of Wisconsin-Madison Population Health Institute. County Health Rankings. Retrieved in July 2023 from https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/

County Health Rankings model © 2014 UWPHI

Community Insights

Community Survey

A community survey was conducted throughout the region from June to September of 2023. The purpose of the survey was to invite community insights about health needs in the region. The survey was conducted using mixed methods, and respondents could either complete their survey online or submit a paper copy of their survey response. Great Rivers United Way staff and volunteers entered paper survey responses into a Qualtrics survey portal provided by Community Health Solutions.

The survey was conducted in partnership with a wide range of community partners that helped raise awareness and encourage community members to complete the survey. In planning the survey, the project partners began with a common aim to conduct an inclusive survey with insights from a wide array of community members.

It should be noted that the surveys were conducted using convenience sampling. Convenience sampling is a practical approach for obtaining insights from as many people as possible, but without random selection. The results of a convenience sample are instructive for understanding the scope of issues and opportunities in a community; however, results might not be statistically representative of the entire population of a community.

A total of 1,238 individuals submitted a response to the survey (although not every respondent completed every item). A profile of the survey respondents is provided in **Exhibit 1.3.** As shown in the exhibit:

The number of surveys completed by county ranged from 89 in Houston County and Trempealeau County to 536 in La Crosse County. Noting this wide range of responses, it is important to view the survey results at the county level, and recognize that the higher number of responses from La Crosse County and Monroe County have a skewing effect on the regional results.

The survey respondents were predominantly female (77%), as is common in community survey of this type. Beyond the difference in female vs. male respondents, the demographic profile for survey respondents generally (though not precisely) reflects the overall distribution of the population by selected indicators of age, race, ethnicity, and income.
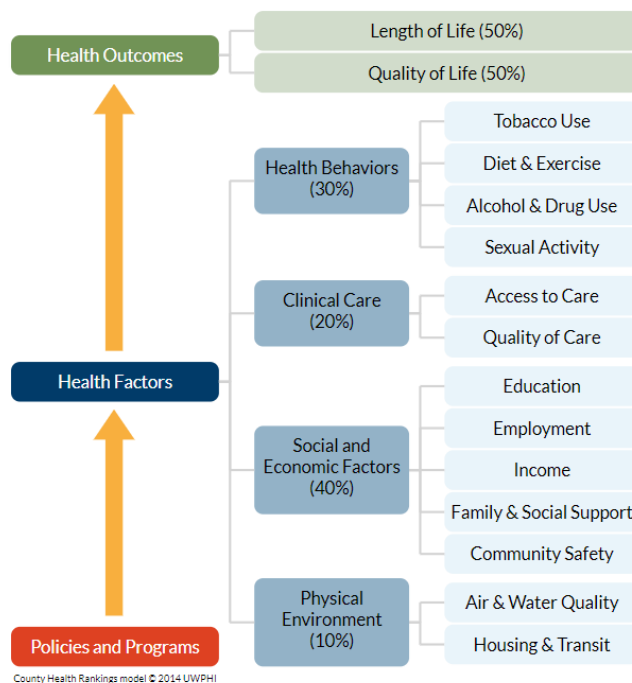
Exhibit 1.3 Profile of Community Survey Respondents

Indicator	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGIONAL TOTAL
Total Survey Responses	92	89	536	226	89	206	1,238
Age	92	86	529	220	88	204	1,219
Age 18-29	20%	10%	17%	9%	8%	7%	13%
Age 30-44	34%	47%	29%	39%	30%	22%	31%
Age 45-64	34%	37%	33%	42%	47%	41%	37%
Age 65+	13%	6%	21%	10%	16%	30%	18%
Gender	92	86	528	222	88	204	1,220
Female	77%	72%	77%	77%	86%	75%	77%
Male	20%	27%	21%	19%	10%	22%	20%
Prefer not to answer	2%	1%	2%	3%	3%	3%	3%
Self-identify	1%	0%	0%	0%	0%	1%	0%
Race	91	86	523	220	87	204	1,211
American Indian	1%	1%	0%	0%	1%	0%	1%
Asian	3%	1%	3%	0%	0%	1%	2%
Black/African American	0%	0%	3%	0%	0%	1%	2%
Pacific Islander	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
White	93%	98%	90%	95%	92%	94%	93%
Other race	1%	0%	2%	2%	2%	1%	2%
Two or more races	1%	0%	1%	1%	5%	2%	1%
Ethnicity (Hispanic)	92	86	522	223	87	203	1,213
Hispanic	2%	20%	3%	8%	13%	1%	6%
Ethnicity (Hmong)	92	86	521	220	86	202	1,207
Hmong	1%	2%	3%	3%	2%	0%	2%
Education	92	86	526	220	88	204	1,216
Post-graduate/professional	17%	20%	32%	21%	15%	25%	26%
College graduate	42%	53%	35%	38%	42%	37%	38%
Some college	13%	14%	20%	20%	10%	15%	17%
Vocational school	11%	7%	6%	9%	13%	13%	9%
High school diploma	14%	5%	6%	11%	17%	10%	9%
Did not graduate from high school	2%	1%	1%	1%	3%	0%	1%
Housing Type	91	86	526	221	89	202	1,215
Owner-occupied	82%	78%	66%	70%	74%	86%	73%
Renter	13%	20%	30%	23%	26%	13%	24%
Other arrangement	4%	2%	5%	7%	0%	1%	4%
Housing Type	88	83	517	218	84	196	1,186
Less than $15,000	3%	8%	9%	7%	8%	5%	8%
$15,000 to $24,999	2%	18%	8%	3%	7%	5%	7%
$25,000 to $34,999	10%	5%	8%	8%	4%	9%	8%
$35,000 to $49,999	11%	8%	8%	7%	7%	12%	9%
$50,000 to $74,999	17%	16%	16%	21%	18%	17%	17%
$75,000 to $99,999	22%	16%	17%	21%	17%	21%	18%
$100,000 to $149,999	19%	19%	19%	21%	27%	15%	19%
$150,000 to $199,999	14%	5%	8%	10%	2%	9%	8%
$200,000 and over	1%	5%	7%	2%	10%	8%	6%

Source: CHS analysis of community survey data.

Community Insight Events

In addition to the community survey, the project partners conducted a series of 'community insight events' where community members were invited to share their insights about community needs in a group setting. A total of 20 community insight events were conducted in the August-October time frame (see **Exhibit 8.2** for details). Within each event the participants were invited to share their insights in response to these questions:

1. What do you see as the most important health issues or concerns facing your community?

2. Are you aware of any new or emerging health issues or concerns that people should know about?

3. Are there any particular population groups who may be especially vulnerable for problems with their health or health care?

4. What do you see as the most important health resources available to support people in your community?

5. Do you have any ideas about how people or organizations could work together to promote better health or health care for the community?

Limitations of this Report

This Compass Now 2024 report is intended to inform community action strategies by stakeholders across the region. The data presented within the report comes from multiple sources, each with its own set of limitations that should be considered when interpreting the results.

Community Indicators
Each section of the report includes a series of exhibits showing various community indicators based on various existing data sources. This array of community indicators can be helpful for planning community improvement strategies, but it does not include every possible indicator of community health and well-being. We encourage readers to use this report as a starting point, and go beyond the report to seek additional data and information that can help you plan and implement effective strategies for community improvement.

County Health Rankings
The County Health Rankings are developed from multiple data sources with varying levels of reliability, and some of these data sources are several years old. Consequently, the rankings and indicators do not provide precise and definitive evidence on where one county stands compared to another. However, in most cases the rankings and indicators are reliable enough to illustrate general community strengths and areas of concern, and they can be helpful for informing efforts to improve community health and well-being.

Community Survey
As noted earlier, the community survey was conducted as an open survey with convenience sampling rather than random household sampling. The survey results do provide rich insights into community perceptions of need. However, because of the convenience sampling strategy, they are not structured to support statistical analyses that would generalize the results from the sample to the broader population.

Respondent Perceptions.
In the community survey and the community insight events, respondents were invited to share their insights about a wide range of factors at the individual, household, and community level. Many of the survey questions rely on respondent perceptions of community concerns and community supports. Perceptions are subjective and based on the unique experience of each individual respondent. A respondent's perception of a community issue reflects their reality, but might not reflect the broader situation in the community.

Bridging the Compass Now 2021 and 2024 Reports

The study methods used to produce this report were designed to provide continuity with the 2021 Compass Now Report where it was feasible and productive to do so. To summarize the similarities and differences:

Although there is general continuity of structure between the 2021 and 2024 reports, caution should be used when comparing the results. One consideration is that many of the community indicators in the 2024 report are several years old, and the same was true for the 2021 report. This problem of 'data lag' is a challenge not only for the Compass Now study series, but also for every community study that relies on secondary sources of data. Consequently, it is not possible to measure improvement on community indicators from 2021 to 2024 in a relevant and reliable way.

Focusing on community data, this study relies heavily on County Health Rankings data, as did the Compass Now studies published in 2018 and 2021. There are some County Health Rankings data that are no longer available for this report, and these are noted in the relevant sections of the report.

This study also relies on local indicators of mortality, maternal and infant health, child health, and selected other factors. There are some differences in the availability and structure of selected indicators, and these are also noted in the relevant sections of the report.

Focusing on community surveys, the 2021 study included a highly structured, random household survey alongside a more open 'convenience sample' survey. In 2024 the study partners decided to focus on convenience sampling for the community survey, the rationale being that a convenience survey could be more flexibly focused on capturing insights from diverse populations across the study region. The study partners also conducted a series of 'community insight events' to capture additional perspectives from community members.

As a final consideration, this report is not intended as a scorecard on the health and well-being of one county compared to another. Throughout the report we provide county-level indicators on a number of community issues. However, these indicators are not structured to support reliable comparisons between counties. To illustrate this point, although the County Health Rankings do provide a relative ordering of counties on various indicators, in many cases the differences in ranking are not based on statistically significant differences in the underlying data used to generate the rankings. Beyond statistics, each county has its own unique set of factors that influence the health and well-being of the population. We recommend focusing on how to sustain strengths and address challenges within each county rather than comparing counties in scorecard fashion.
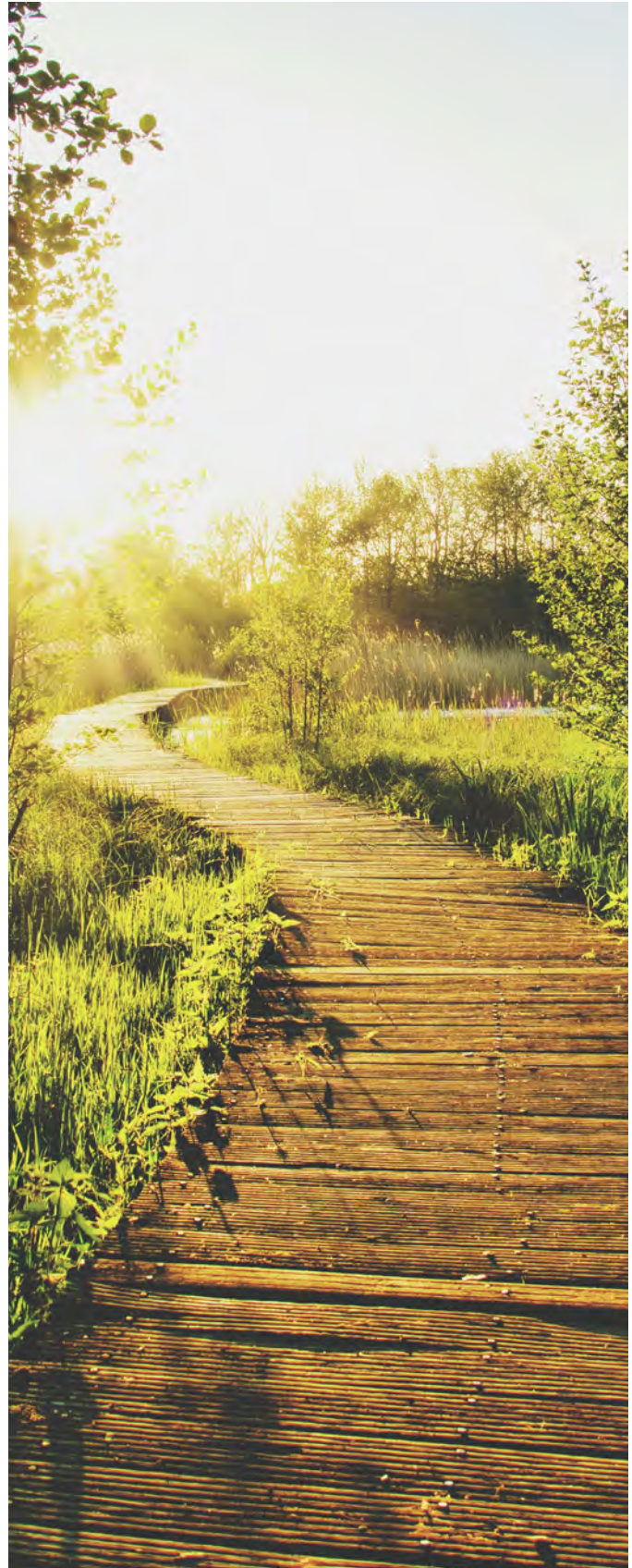
How is the Great Rivers Region Faring?

This section presents an overview of the six-county region included in the study. The results include a demographic snapshot of the region, population projections, and a set of maps showing how selected populations are distributed throughout the region. Also shown is a summary exhibit of the County Health Rankings for the region.

Section Outline

2. The Six-County Region
Demographic Profile
Summary of County Health Rankings

3. Length and Quality of Life
Community Indicators
Community Insights

4. Health Behaviors and Concerns
Community Indicators
Community Insights

5. Health Care and Utilization
Community Indicators
Community Insights

6. Social and Economic Factors
Community Indicators
Community Insights

7. Physical Environment and Safety
Community Indicators
Community Insights

Demographic Profile

As shown in **Exhibit 2.1,** the six-county region is home to an estimated 263,466 residents. Within the population:
- An estimated 21% are children, and an estimated 20% are adults age 65+.
- An estimated 7 percent of the population is classified as other than White, and about 4 percent are classified as multi-race.
- An estimated 11% of households have income below poverty, and an estimated 38% have household income under $50,000 per year.

Exhibit 2.1 Demographic Snapshot of the Region

Indicator	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGIONAL TOTAL
2023 Total Population	13,234	18,813	122,678	46,577	31,170	30,994	263,466
Age (2023)							
Age 0-17	20%	20%	19%	24%	22%	23%	21%
Age 18-29	12%	13%	21%	13%	12%	12%	17%
Age 30-44	17%	17%	18%	18%	19%	16%	18%
Age 45-64	28%	27%	23%	26%	27%	27%	25%
Age 65+	23%	23%	18%	19%	21%	22%	20%
Sex or Gender (2023)							
Female Population	49%	50%	50%	49%	49%	50%	50%
Male Population	51%	50%	50%	51%	51%	50%	50%
Race (2023)							
American Indian/Alaska Native Population	0%	0%	0%	1%	1%	0%	1%
Asian Population	0%	1%	5%	1%	0%	0%	3%
Black/African American Population	0%	1%	2%	1%	0%	0%	1%
Other Race Population	1%	1%	1%	2%	8%	1%	2%
Pacific Islander Population	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Population of Two or More Races	3%	3%	5%	5%	5%	3%	4%
White Population	95%	95%	88%	89%	85%	95%	89%
Ethnicity (2023)							
Hispanic Population	3%	1%	3%	6%	14%	2%	4%
Household Income							
Total Households	5,668	8,050	51,322	18,380	12,453	12,261	108,134
Households Below Poverty Level (2021)	10%	8%	11%	10%	8%	14%	11%
Median Household Income	$64,948	$65,712	$62,122	$66,761	$67,619	$61,033	$63,917
Household Income less than $15,000	8%	7%	9%	7%	7%	11%	8%
Household Income $15,000-$24,999	8%	7%	9%	7%	6%	8%	8%
Household Income $25,000-$34,999	9%	7%	10%	8%	8%	8%	9%
Household Income $35,000-$49,999	12%	12%	13%	13%	13%	13%	13%
Household Income $50,000-$74,999	20%	23%	17%	19%	20%	18%	19%
Household Income $75,000-$99,999	17%	13%	15%	16%	17%	14%	15%
Household Income $100,000-$149,999	18%	20%	15%	18%	18%	18%	17%
Household Income $150,000-$199,999	6%	7%	7%	6%	6%	6%	6%
Household Income $200,000 or greater	3%	4%	6%	5%	5%	4%	5%
Housing Type							
Owner Occupied Housing Units	77%	82%	65%	72%	74%	79%	70%
Renter Occupied Housing Units	23%	18%	35%	28%	26%	21%	30%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of data from ESRI using ArcGIS Business Software. See Appendix A for details.

Exhibit 2.2 provides a closer look at the population by age.
- Within the 2023 population there are an estimated 55,477 children age 0-17, and 51,578 adults age 65+.
- Looking ahead to 2028, overall population growth for the counties is projected to range from 0-1%.
- Within all counties, the most substantial growth is projected for the older-adult population.

Exhibit 2.2 Population Estimates and Projections

Indicator	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGIONAL TOTAL
Total Population							
2023 Total Population Estimate	13,234	18,813	122,678	46,577	31,170	30,994	263,466
2028 Total Population Projection	13,138	18,766	124,103	46,625	31,416	31,060	265,108
2023-2028 % Change	-1%	0%	1%	0%	1%	0%	1%
Children Age 0-17							
2023 Child Population (Age <18)	2,599	3,813	23,871	11,109	6,840	7,245	55,477
2028 Child Population (Age <18)	2,599	3,855	24,027	11,252	6,967	7,306	56,006
2023-2028 % Change	0%	1%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%
Adult Population Age 18-64							
2023 Adult Population (Age 18-64)	7,536	10,745	76,534	26,691	17,895	17,010	156,411
2028 Adult Population (Age 18-64)	7,073	10,039	74,863	25,513	17,118	16,085	150,691
2023-2028 % Change	-6%	-7%	-2%	-4%	-4%	-5%	-4%
Adults Age 65+							
2023 Senior Population (Age 65+)	3,099	4,255	22,273	8,777	6,435	6,739	51,578
2028 Senior Population (Age 65+)	3,466	4,872	25,213	9,860	7,331	7,669	58,411
2023-2028 % Change	12%	15%	13%	12%	14%	14%	13%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of data from ESRI using ArcGIS Business Software. See Appendix A for details.
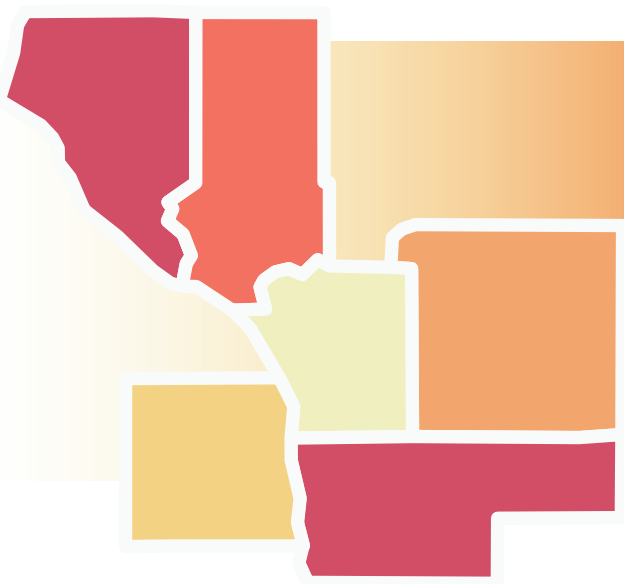
Demographic Maps

Demographic maps can be helpful for understanding the diversity and distribution of the community population. **Exhibits 2.3 through 2.11** illustrate the population distribution across the community based on demographic factors of poverty, age, race, and Hispanic ethnicity.

Exhibit 2.3 Total Population and Population Density by County

Exhibit 2.3 shows the total population and population density by county. The darker shading shows La Crosse County has the largest population and population density in the region.

2023 Population Estimate
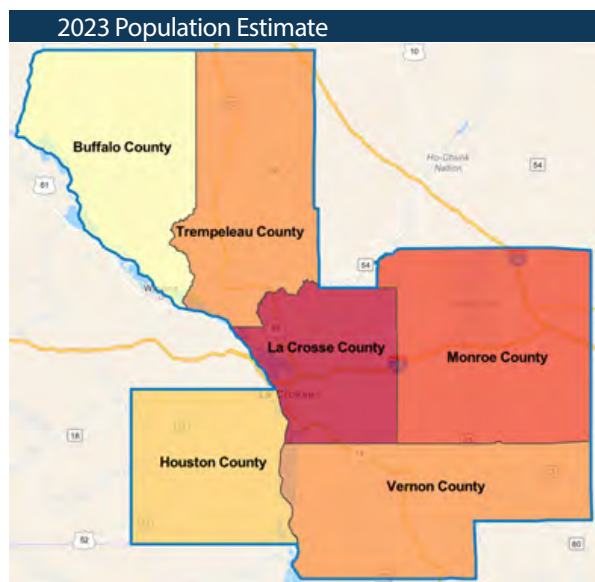
Buffalo County	13,234
Houston County	18,813
La Crosse County	122,678
Monroe County	46,577
Trempealeau County	31,170
Vernon County	30,994
Region	263,466

2023 Population Density Estimate
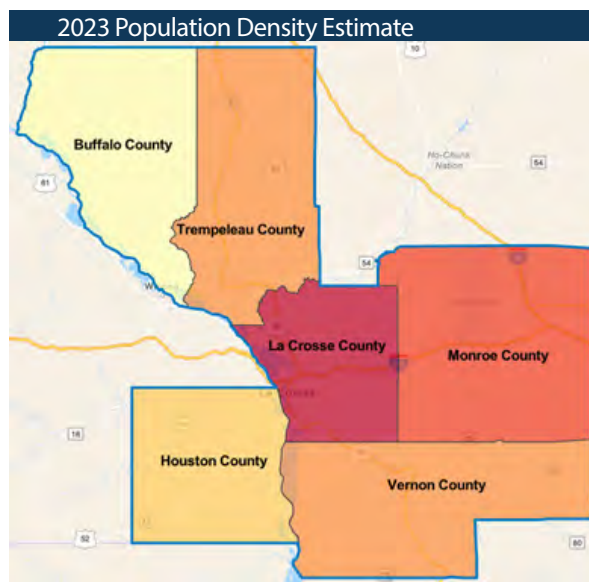
Buffalo County	19.7
Houston County	34.1
La Crosse County	271.6
Monroe County	51.7
Trempealeau County	42.5
Vernon County	39.2

(population per square mile)

Exhibit 2.4 Total Population by Census Tract

Exhibit 2.4 shows a closer look at population indicators by census tract. The left-hand map shows population counts, with darker shading indicating census tracts with higher populations. The right-hand map shows population density, with darker shading indicating higher density in terms of population per square mile.

2023 Population Estimate

2023 Population Density Estimate
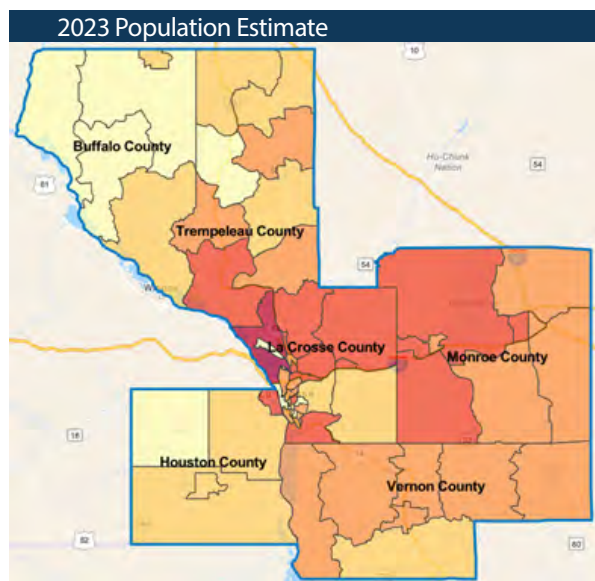
(population per square mile)

1,937 - 2,815	5,156 - 7,874	11.3 - 927.9	5,370.8 - 7,847.2
2,816 - 3,834	7,875 - 8,971	928 - 2,857.5	7,847.3 - 8,698
3,835 - 5,155		2,857.6 - 5,370.7	

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of data from ESRI using ArcGIS Business Software. See Appendix A for details.

Exhibit 2.5 Households with Income Below Poverty by Census Tract

Exhibit 2.5 shows households with income below poverty by census tract. The left-hand map shows household counts, with darker shading indicating census tracts with higher numbers of households in poverty. The right-hand map shows the percentage of households in poverty within each census tract.

2023 Households Estimate (count)

28 - 117	341 - 719
118 - 205	720 - 914
206 - 340	

2023 Households Estimate (percent)

1.31 - 7.4%	27.61 - 53.8%
7.41 - 13.02%	53.81 - 65.95%
13.03 - 27.6%	
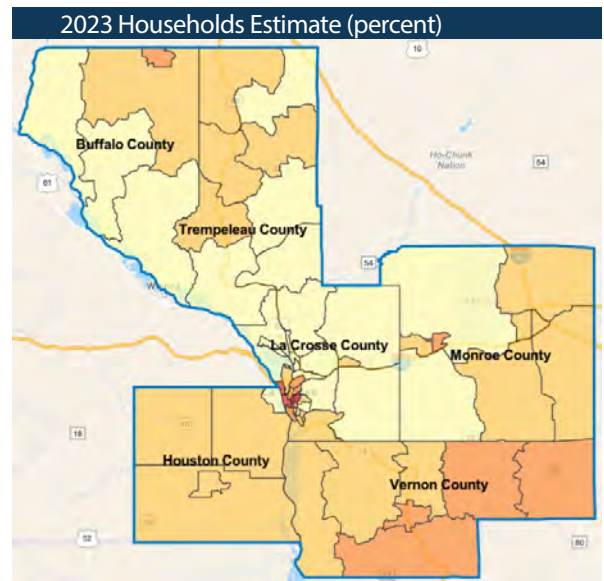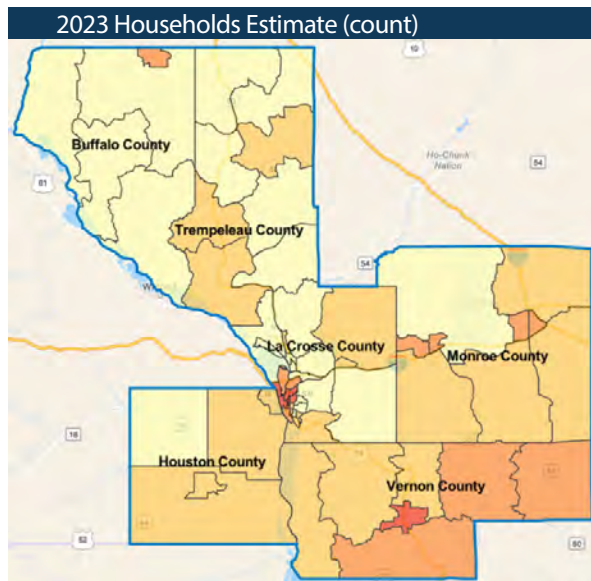
Exhibit 2.6 Child Population by Census Tract

Exhibit 2.6 shows the child population (<18) by census tract. The left-hand map shows population counts, with darker shading indicating census tracts with higher numbers of children. The right-hand map shows children as a percentage of the total population within each census tract.
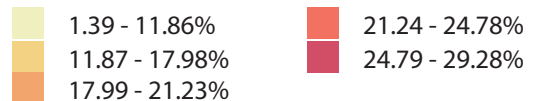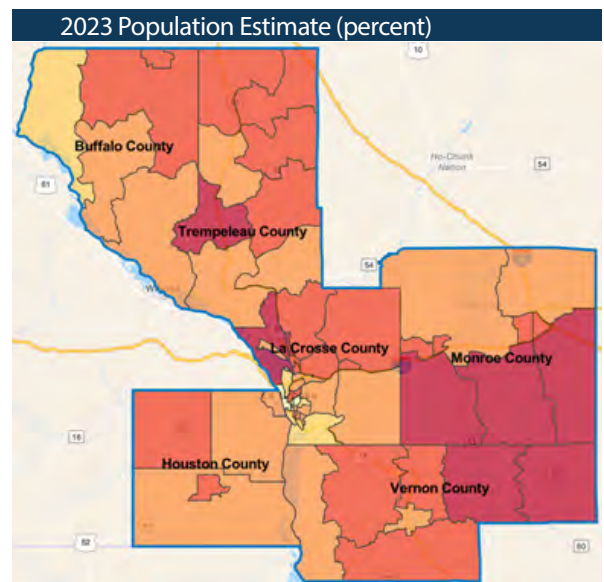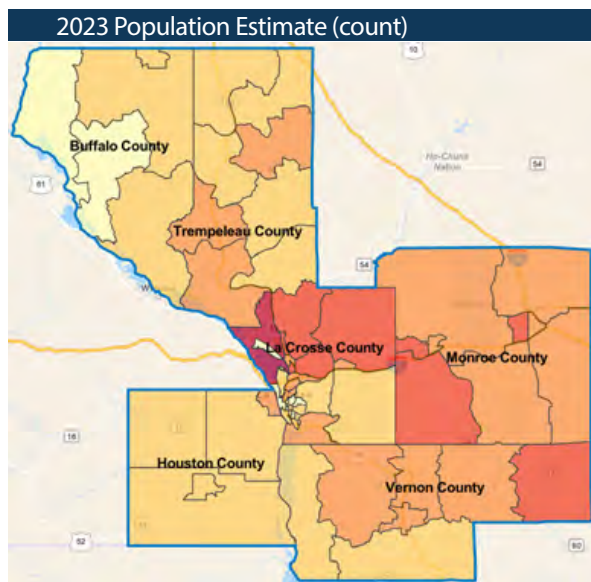
2023 Population Estimate (count)

74 - 488	1,277 - 2,029
489 - 867	2,030 - 2,399
868 - 1,276	

2023 Population Estimate (percent)

1.39 - 11.86%	21.24 - 24.78%
11.87 - 17.98%	24.79 - 29.28%
17.99 - 21.23%	

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of data from ESRI using ArcGIS Business Software. See Appendix A for details.

Exhibit 2.7 Older Adult Population by Census Tract

Exhibit 2.7 shows the older adult population (65+) by census tract. The left-hand map shows population counts, with darker shading indicating census tracts with higher numbers of older adults. The right-hand map shows older adults as a percentage of the total population within each census tract.

2023 Population Estimate (count)

- 101 - 457
- 458 - 741
- 742 - 982
- 983 - 1,349
- 1,350 - 1,545

2023 Population Estimate (percent)

- 3.08 - 8.05%
- 8.06 - 16.42%
- 16.43 - 20.27%
- 20.28 - 24.25%
- 24.26 - 28.79%
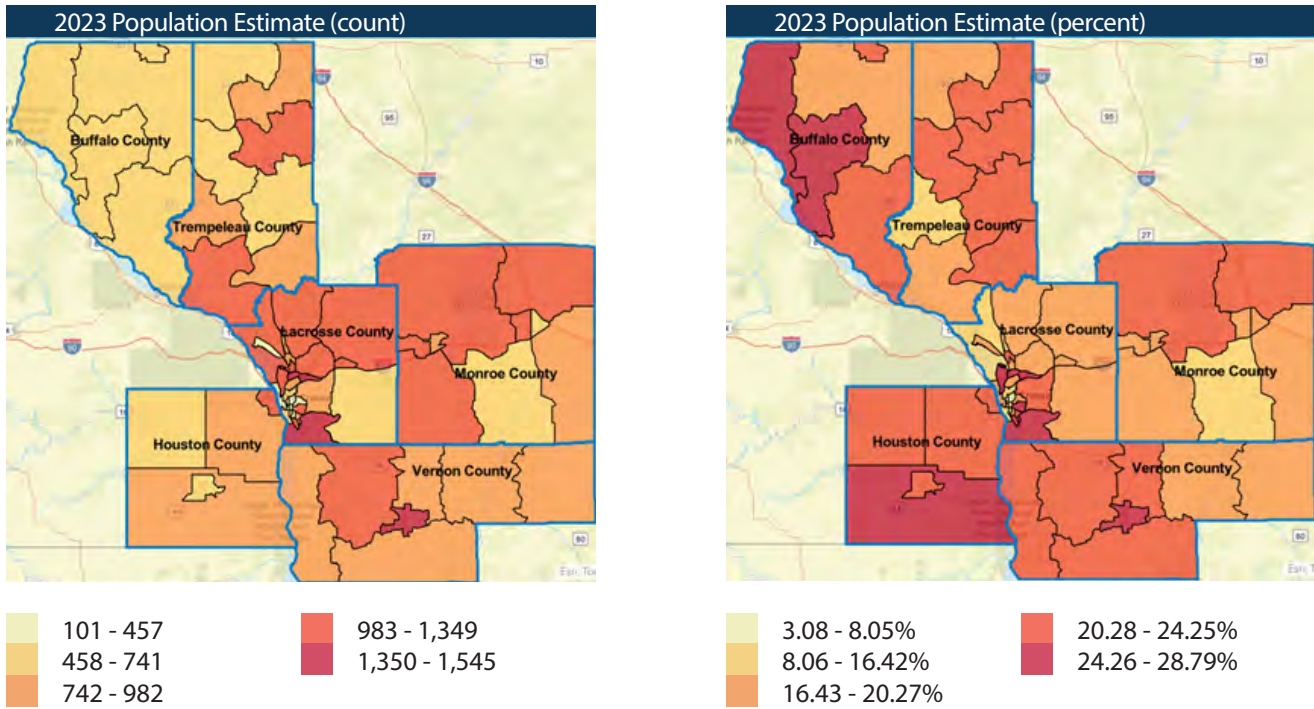
Exhibit 2.8 Asian Population by Census Tract

Exhibit 2.8 shows the Asian population by census tract. The left-hand map shows population counts, with darker shading indicating census tracts with higher numbers of people classified as Asian. The right-hand map shows the Asian population as a percentage of the total population within each census tract.
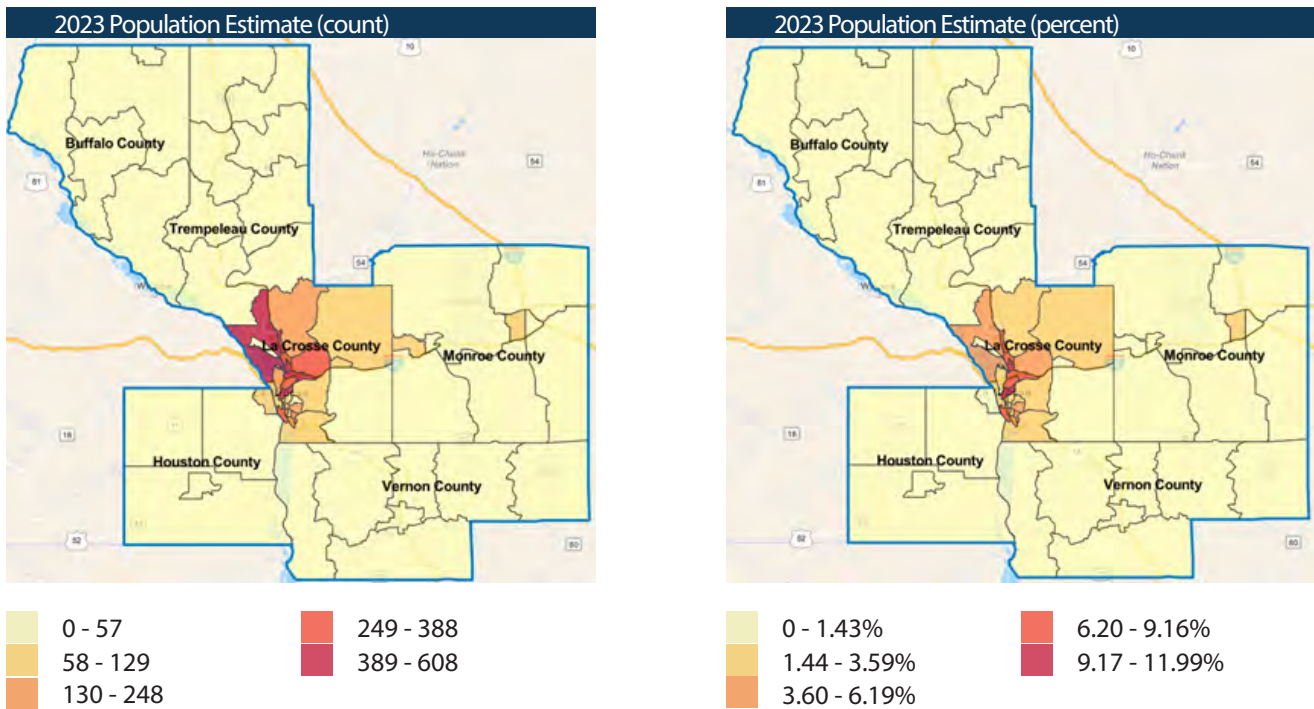
2023 Population Estimate (count)

- 0 - 57
- 58 - 129
- 130 - 248
- 249 - 388
- 389 - 608

2023 Population Estimate (percent)

- 0 - 1.43%
- 1.44 - 3.59%
- 3.60 - 6.19%
- 6.20 - 9.16%
- 9.17 - 11.99%

Exhibit 2.9 Black / African American Population by Census Tract

Exhibit 2.9 shows the Black or African American population by census tract. The left-hand map shows population counts, with darker shading indicating higher numbers of people classified as Black or African American. The right-hand map shows the Black or African American population as a percentage of the total population.

2023 Population Estimate (count)

5 - 26	164 - 280
27 - 72	281 - 363
73 - 163	

2023 Population Estimate (percent)

0.12 - 0.66%	3.97 - 6.10%
0.67 - 1.72%	6.11 - 7.61%
1.73 - 3.96%	
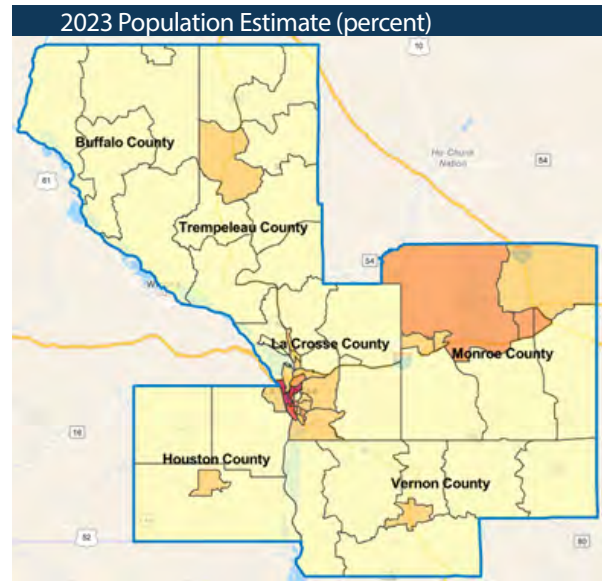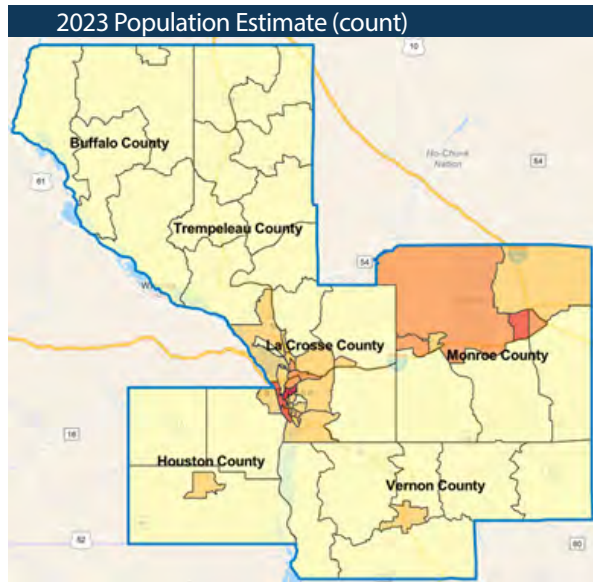
Exhibit 2.10 Other Race Population by Census Tract

Exhibit 2.10 shows the Other Race population by census tract. The left-hand map shows population counts, with darker shading indicating higher numbers of people classified as Other Race. The right-hand map shows the Other Race population as a percentage of the total population.
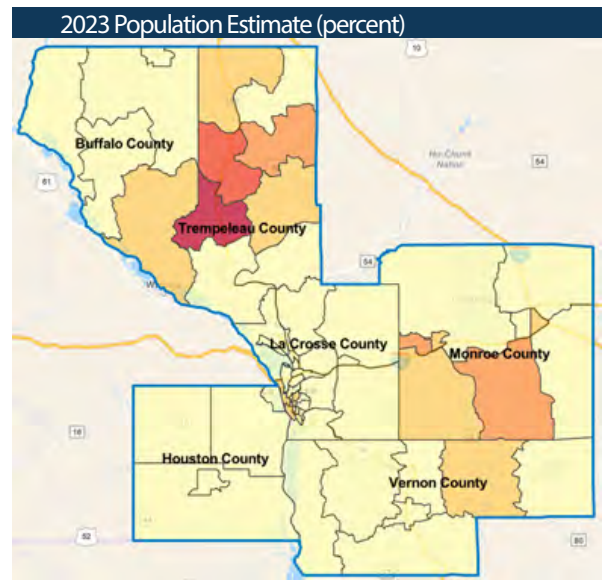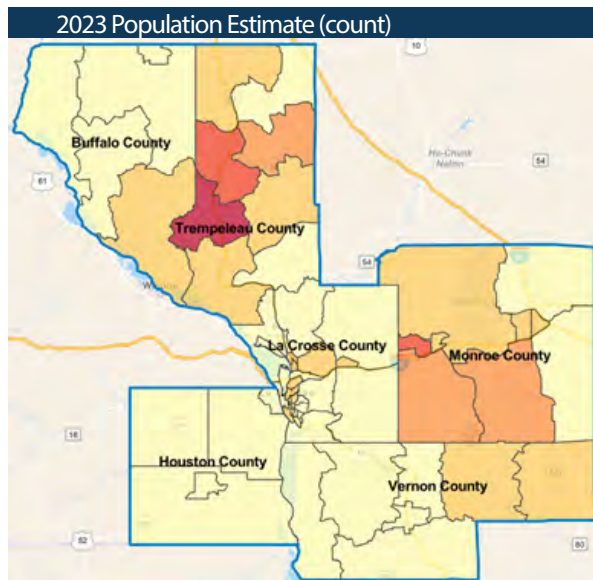
2023 Population Estimate (count)

4 - 44	261 - 1,114
45 - 126	1,115 - 1,862
127 - 260	

2023 Population Estimate (percent)

0.12 - 1.4%	9.20 - 25.62%
1.41 - 3.50%	25.63 - 38.27%
3.51 - 9.19%	

Source: CHS analysis of population estimates published by ESRI. See Appendix A for details.

Exhibit 2.11 Hispanic Population by Census Tract

Exhibit 2.11 shows the Hispanic ethnicity population by census tract. The left-hand map shows population counts, with darker shading indicating higher numbers of people classified as Hispanic. The right-hand map shows the Hispanic population as a percentage of the total population.

2023 Population Estimate (count)

19 - 96	479 - 1,806
97 - 195	1,807 - 2,700
196 - 478	

2023 Population Estimate (percent)

0.55 - 3.69%	18.98 - 39.98%
3.70 - 10.61%	39.99 - 55.50%
10.62 - 18.97%	
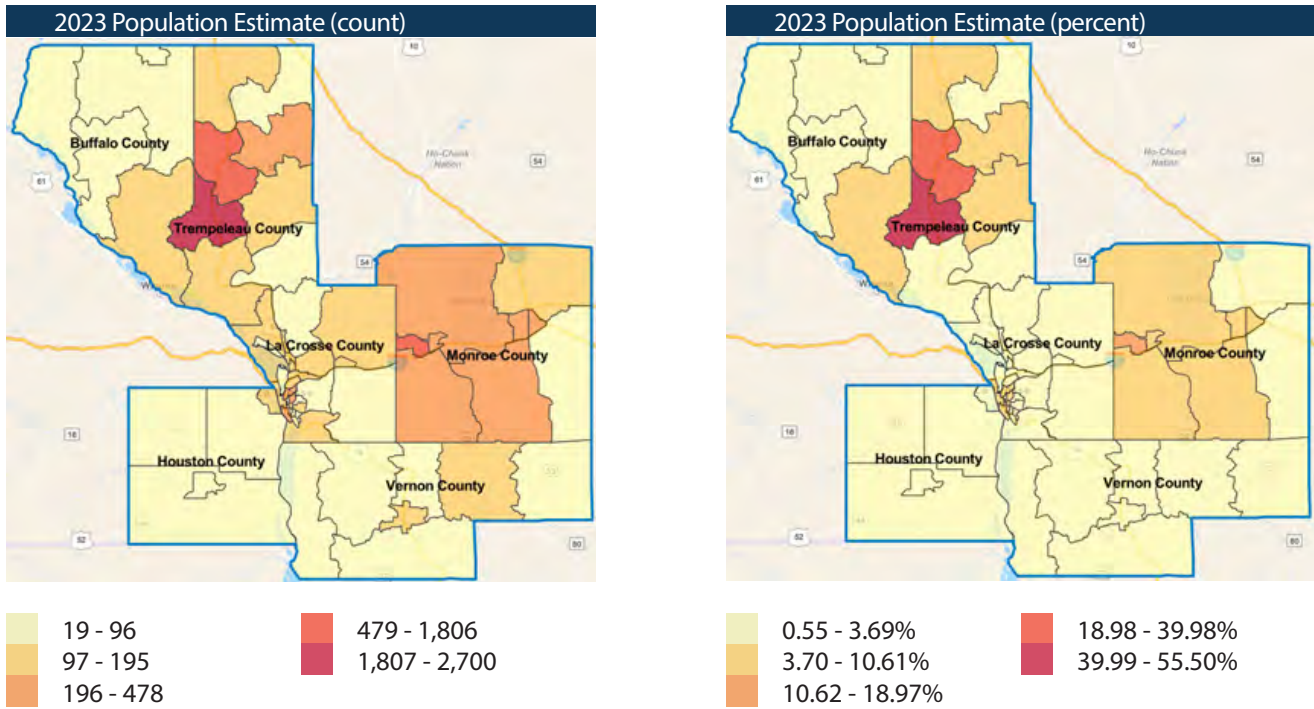
Source: CHS analysis of population estimates published by ESRI. See Appendix A for details.

Summary of County Health Rankings

Exhibit 2.12 provides a profile of the County Health Rankings for the six-county region. Within the exhibit, Houston County is ranked among other counties in Minnesota, and the Wisconsin counties are ranked among all counties in the state. The top half of the exhibit shows where each county ranks on the indicators shown. Green shading indicates a ranking in the 1st (best) quartile, with blue, gold, and red shading indicating the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th quartile. The bottom part of the exhibit shows selected trends for the six counties, where **B** and **W** indicate a trend getting better or worse. The rankings and trends are explored in more detail in the following pages.

Exhibit 2.12 County Health Rankings Summary for 2023

	BU	HO*	LC	MO	TR	VE
Health Outcomes	10	5	26	46	42	30
Length of Life	4	5	22	51	35	33
Quality of Life	27	9	33	46	47	31
Health Factors	39	11	7	27	31	57
Health Behaviors	31	10	14	49	43	59
Clinical Care	60	14	1	17	38	57
Social & Economic Factors	27	11	10	36	24	47
Physical Environment	61	69	22	16	55	66

Ranking Key: ■ 1st (best) quartile   ■ 2nd quartile   ■ 3rd quartile   ■ 4th quartile

Selected Trends	BU	HO*	LC	MO	TR	VE
Length of Life						
Premature death	B	B	--	B	B	B
Health Behaviors						
Adult obesity	Trends for adult obesity and physical activity were not available for the current report.					
Physical inactivity	As of the 2021 Compass Now report, both indicators were getting worse.					
Alcohol-impaired driving deaths	--	--	W	--	--	W
Sexually transmitted infections	W	W	W	W	W	W
Clinical Care						
Uninsured	B	B	B	B	B	B
Primary Care Physicians	W	--	--	--	W	B
Dentists	B	B	B	B	B	B
Preventable Hospital Stays	--	--	B	B	--	B
Mammography Screening	--	--	--	--	--	B
Flu Vaccinations	--	B	B	B	B	B
Social & Economic Factors						
Unemployment	--	B	--	--	--	B
Children in poverty	--	--	B	--	--	W
Violent crime (Not Available)						
Injury deaths (2016-2020)	55	68	83	69	74	68
Physical Environment						
Air pollution – particulate matter	B	B	B	B	B	B

Trend Key: **B** Getting better   -- No trend   **W** Getting worse

Source: University of Wisconsin-Madison Population Health Institute. County Health Rankings. Retrieved in July 2023 from http://www.countyhealthrankings.org

*Note: Houston County is ranked among all Minnesota counties. Other counties are ranked among all Wisconsin counties.

3. Length and Quality of Life

Measures of length of life in a community indicate whether people are dying too early, prompting discussion of possible reasons and action strategies. Measures of quality of life indicate how people feel about their health and well-being at a given point in time. This section describes selected community indicators and community insights about length and quality of life.
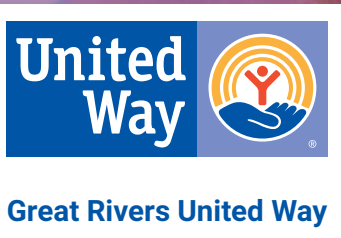
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Community Indicators

Exhibit 3.1 shows the County Health Rankings for length and quality of life. The rankings are based on a set of indicators including premature death, physical and mental health status, and low weight births. The results indicate all of the six counties are in the first, second, or third quartile for their respective states. The premature death rate is improving or stable across the six counties.

Exhibit 3.1 County Health Rankings for Length and Quality of Life

	BU	HO*	LC	MO	TR	VE	MN*	WI
Rankings								
Length of Life Rank	4	5	22	51	35	33	--	--
Quality of Life Rank	27	9	33	46	47	31	--	--

Ranking Key: ■ **1st (best) quartile**   ■ **2nd quartile**   ■ **3rd quartile**   ■ **4th quartile**

	BU	HO*	LC	MO	TR	VE	MN*	WI
Indicators								
Premature death** (2018-2020)	4,700	4,500	6,000	7,000	6,300	6,200	5,600	6,600
Poor or fair health (2020)	12%	11%	10%	12%	12%	13%	10%	12%
Poor physical health days (2020)	3.2	2.8	3.0	3.3	3.1	3.4	2.6	3.2
Poor mental health days (2020)	4.3	4.2	4.5	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.1	4.4
Low birth-weight (2014-2020)***	6%	5%	7%	7%	7%	5%	7%	8%
Selected Trends								
Premature death rate	B	B	--	B	B	B	--	--

Trend Key: **B** Getting better   -- No trend   **W** Getting worse

*Houston County is ranked among all Minnesota counties. Other counties are ranked among all Wisconsin counties.

** Premature death is defined as years of potential life lost before age 75 per 100,000 population (age-adjusted).

*** As reported in Exhibit 3.1, County Health Rankings uses a rolling, multi-year average of low birth-weight in its ranking model. Exhibit 3.3 reports a one-year rate for 2021 or 2020 as indicated. Source: University of Wisconsin-Madison Population Health Institute. *County Health Rankings*. Retrieved in July 2023 from http://www.countyhealthrankings.org.

> " I would like to see more continuing education opportunities for senior citizens. More opportunities for retirees to engage with the community now that they have more free time.
>
> ~ Vernon County Survey Respondent "

Exhibit 3.2 shows the leading causes of death in the region in 2021 for Wisconsin Counties, and 2020 for Houston County. In all of the counties, the two leading causes by a substantial margin were heart disease and malignant neoplasms (cancers), which is typically the case in United States communities. COVID-19 was also among the top ten causes, along with accidents, several types of chronic conditions, and intentional self-harm.

Exhibit 3.2 Leading Causes of Death

	BU	LC	MO	TR	VE	WI	HO	MN
Year	2021	2021	2021	2021	2021	2021	2020	2020
Counts-Total Deaths by Leading Causes								
Heart Disease	35	230	106	76	65	12,782	51	8,562
Malignant Neoplasms	35	200	102	62	67	11,335	41	9,940
COVID-19	5	68	41	16	33	5,255	12	5,214
Accidents (Unintentional Injuries)	5	70	31	11	31	4,706	10	3,308
Alzheimer's Disease	x	60	27	x	18	2,371	23	2,587
Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases	9	61	34	14	12	2,443	10	2,211
Cerebrovascular Diseases	6	66	24	13	17	2,637	10	2,316
Diabetes Mellitus	x	39	20	12	6	1,685	6	1,492
Chronic Liver Disease and Cirrhosis	x	22	9	5	6	913	1	895
Intentional Self-Harm (suicide)	x	21	7	x	5	905	x	x
Rates-Age Adjusted Per 100,000 Population								
Heart Disease	160.6	146.9	173.9	175.9	148.4	164.6	140.9	117.5
Malignant Neoplasms	154.3	129.2	164.1	143.5	154.5	144.1	128.4	143.7
COVID-19	26.2	45.9	70.6	42.7	78.6	69.3	x	x
Accidents (Unintentional Injuries)	25.2	55.2	67.3	32.3	86.3	72.6	38.3	45.7
Alzheimer's Disease	x	37.2	47.1	x	39.3	30.9	32.9	34.1
Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases	41.8	39.5	57.6	34.7	27.4	31.1	29.3	33.5
Cerebrovascular Diseases	27.2	40.6	41.6	29.7	37.3	34.2	28.6	32.4
Diabetes Mellitus	x	25.2	33.4	27.2	12.2	22.1	21.8	19.6
Chronic Liver Disease and Cirrhosis	x	16.3	16.2	10.4	13.8	12.6	x	10.4
Intentional Self-Harm (suicide)	x	19.0	15.7	x	15.6	15.1	x	x

Note on Cell Suppression and Cells with Counts of Zero: An "x" indicates a value that is not reported in public sources, because of suppression due to small size, or other reasons. Source: Wisconsin Dept. of Health Services, Division of Public Health, Office of Health Informatics. Wisconsin Interactive Statistics on Health (WISH) data query system and 2020 Minnesota Department of Health County Health Tables

Exhibit 3.3 shows indicators of maternal and infant health for the region. Note that reporting years differ for Houston County, and also note that infant deaths are counted across a five-year period.
- Low birth weight rates ranged from 4% to 9% across the six counties.
- Five-year infant death rates ranged from 3.1 to 8.1 per 1,000 live births across the five counties reporting.

Exhibit 3.3 Maternal and Infant Health

	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION	MN	WI
Total Births	124	203	1,150	600	399	435	2,911	63,451	61,814
Total Low Weight Births	11	8	79	39	29	17	183	3,098	4,768
As pct. of Total Births	9%	4%	7%	7%	7%	4%	6%	5%	8%
Infant Deaths	x	4	35	20	17	11	87	1,593	389
Infant Death Rate per 1,000 Live Births	3.1	-	6.0	7.0	8.1	5.3	-	-	6.1

Notes: "x" indicates a value that is less than 5 (but more than zero) and has been suppressed to protect confidentiality. " - " means not reported in public sources. Houston County low weight birth data are for 'singleton births' only. Houston County infant death data are for 2015-2019. As reported in Exhibit 3.1, County Health Rankings uses a rolling, multi-year average of low birth-weight in its ranking model. Exhibit 3.3 reports a one-year rate for 2021(2020 for HO*) Source: Wisconsin Dept. of Health Services, Division of Public Health, Office of Health Informatics. Wisconsin Interactive Statistics on Health (WISH) data query system and 2020 Minnesota Department of Health County Health Tables

Community Insights

Exhibit 3.4 shows ratings of selected aspects of community life on a scale from poor to excellent. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. Topics receiving ratings of poor or fair at the regional level included:

a. 21% for the community as a place to live
b. 36% for the community as a place that meets their family's recreational needs
c. 40% for opportunities to explore interest and participate in positive activities
d. 23% for opportunities to volunteer
e. 53% for the community as a place where all people are treated respectfully
f. 58% for the community as a place where people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds are included in decision making

Exhibit 3.4 Ratings of Community Life

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Survey Responses	92	87	535	224	89	204	1,231
a. Rating of your community as a place to live							
Poor	1%	0%	2%	4%	4%	2%	2%
Fair	11%	14%	18%	24%	19%	10%	19%
Good	61%	54%	55%	58%	57%	59%	62%
Excellent	27%	32%	25%	14%	19%	28%	16%
b. Your community as a place that meets your family's recreational needs (e.g., fine arts, outdoor activities, etc.)							
Poor	22%	5%	5%	17%	23%	10%	11%
Fair	40%	30%	14%	37%	28%	31%	25%
Good	29%	40%	43%	38%	31%	39%	39%
Excellent	8%	24%	36%	8%	17%	19%	24%
No Opinion	2%	1%	2%	1%	1%	1%	2%
c. Opportunities for youth to explore interests and participate in positive activities							
Poor	28%	10%	6%	18%	18%	11%	12%
Fair	33%	28%	18%	38%	30%	37%	28%
Good	33%	37%	41%	34%	33%	34%	37%
Excellent	3%	21%	26%	6%	11%	11%	17%
No Opinion	2%	5%	9%	4%	7%	7%	7%
d. Opportunities to volunteer in your community							
Poor	7%	1%	2%	6%	6%	6%	4%
Fair	33%	25%	11%	27%	21%	25%	19%
Good	37%	31%	39%	50%	52%	40%	41%
Excellent	18%	41%	46%	14%	20%	26%	33%
No Opinion	6%	1%	2%	4%	1%	3%	3%
e. Your community as a place where all people are treated respectfully, regardless of their race, culture, religion, gender, sexual orientation, income level, disability or age							
Poor	16%	10%	15%	24%	20%	11%	16%
Fair	32%	29%	41%	32%	36%	39%	37%
Good	41%	43%	33%	34%	34%	37%	35%
Excellent	9%	16%	9%	8%	7%	11%	10%
No Opinion	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
f. Your community as a place where people of different cultural/racial/ethnic backgrounds are included in decision-making							
Poor	22%	15%	23%	27%	30%	22%	23%
Fair	34%	25%	39%	34%	30%	33%	35%
Good	29%	38%	27%	26%	24%	26%	27%
Excellent	6%	20%	8%	5%	6%	8%	8%
No Opinion	9%	2%	4%	8%	11%	11%	7%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.

Exhibit 3.5 shows ratings of selected aspects of educational opportunities on a scale from poor to excellent. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. Topics receiving ratings of poor or fair at the regional level included:

a. 24% for the community as a place that meets their family's educational needs
b. 26% for the availability of early educational opportunities
c. 24% for the quality of education in grades K-12
d. 45% for opportunities to gain additional knowledge or skills
e. 54% for the availability of resources to learn new skills or hobbies

Exhibit 3.5 Ratings of Educational Opportunities

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Survey Responses	92	87	532	226	88	205	1,230
a. Your community as a place that meets your family's educational needs							
Poor	3%	2%	4%	7%	8%	4%	5%
Fair	26%	22%	10%	32%	20%	21%	19%
Good	53%	56%	42%	43%	36%	45%	44%
Excellent	11%	14%	35%	10%	19%	24%	24%
No Opinion	7%	6%	9%	8%	16%	6%	8%
b. The availability of early education opportunities in your community (e.g., play groups, Head Start, 4 year old kindergarten)							
Poor	9%	8%	8%	8%	10%	8%	8%
Fair	24%	18%	12%	22%	20%	21%	18%
Good	41%	51%	37%	38%	31%	43%	39%
Excellent	12%	11%	21%	15%	23%	15%	18%
No Opinion	14%	11%	21%	17%	16%	13%	17%
c. The quality of education grades K -12 in your community							
Poor	3%	2%	4%	9%	5%	4%	5%
Fair	24%	18%	14%	28%	18%	18%	19%
Good	51%	56%	43%	43%	40%	46%	45%
Excellent	15%	14%	25%	10%	19%	22%	20%
No Opinion	7%	9%	14%	10%	18%	10%	12%
d. Opportunities to gain additional knowledge or skills (e.g., tuition reimbursement, conferences, skills training courses, classes)							
Poor	29%	17%	7%	22%	29%	22%	16%
Fair	25%	24%	24%	36%	25%	37%	29%
Good	28%	44%	40%	25%	21%	23%	32%
Excellent	7%	7%	18%	7%	11%	9%	12%
No Opinion	11%	8%	12%	10%	14%	9%	11%
e. The availability of community resources to learn new skills or hobbies (e.g., woodworking, photography, computers)							
Poor	42%	13%	11%	36%	39%	26%	23%
Fair	38%	23%	28%	34%	31%	39%	31%
Good	12%	40%	35%	20%	17%	19%	27%
Excellent	0%	23%	17%	4%	6%	8%	12%
No Opinion	8%	1%	8%	6%	8%	7%	7%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.

Exhibit 3.6 shows ratings of concerns about issues related to community life. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. The percent saying they were very or moderately concerned about each topic at the regional level included:

a. 56% racism
b. 73% school bullying
c. 70% cyber-bullying
d. 60% discrimination

Exhibit 3.6 Concerns about Issues Related to Community Life

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Survey Responses	90	85	534	226	89	205	1,229
a. Racism							
Very Concerned	14%	25%	35%	27%	26%	16%	27%
Moderately Concerned	28%	33%	31%	24%	21%	30%	29%
A Little Concerned	31%	25%	22%	30%	27%	30%	26%
Not Concerned	26%	15%	10%	18%	24%	22%	16%
No Opinion	1%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%
b. School bullying							
Very Concerned	41%	48%	44%	50%	43%	29%	43%
Moderately Concerned	33%	34%	29%	24%	26%	41%	30%
A Little Concerned	17%	14%	15%	18%	16%	20%	17%
Not Concerned	7%	4%	4%	5%	7%	3%	5%
No Opinion	2%	0%	7%	3%	8%	7%	6%
c. Cyber bullying							
Very Concerned	28%	45%	42%	38%	33%	31%	38%
Moderately Concerned	39%	27%	28%	37%	34%	37%	32%
A Little Concerned	21%	21%	17%	15%	18%	16%	17%
Not Concerned	9%	2%	6%	7%	8%	8%	6%
No Opinion	3%	4%	7%	4%	6%	8%	6%
d. Discrimination							
Very Concerned	12%	36%	36%	32%	31%	17%	30%
Moderately Concerned	38%	28%	29%	28%	29%	32%	30%
A Little Concerned	27%	21%	23%	23%	24%	32%	25%
Not Concerned	20%	12%	10%	14%	14%	14%	12%
No Opinion	2%	2%	2%	2%	2%	4%	3%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.

4. Health Behaviors and Concerns

Health behaviors are actions individuals take that affect their health, such as eating well, being physically active, and avoiding smoking, excessive alcohol intake, and risky sexual behavior. This section describes community indicators and community insights about health behaviors and related concerns.

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Community Indicators

Exhibit 4.1 shows the County Health Rankings for health behaviors. The rankings are based on a set of indicators including smoking, obesity, food environment, physical activity, alcohol use, and sexual activity. The results indicate five of six counties are in the first, second, or third quartile for their respective states, with Vernon County in the lowest quartile for Wisconsin. Focusing on trends, the indicators are getting worse for alcohol-impaired driving deaths in two counties, and sexually transmitted infections in six counties.

Exhibit 4.1 County Health Rankings for Health Behaviors

	BU	HO*	LC	MO	TR	VE	MN*	WI
Rankings								
Health Behaviors Rank	31	10	14	49	43	59	--	--

Ranking Key: ■ 1st (best) quartile   ■ 2nd quartile   ■ 3rd quartile   ■ 4th quartile

	BU	HO*	LC	MO	TR	VE	MN*	WI
Indicators								
Adult smoking (2020)	19%	18%	17%	20%	18%	20%	14%	16%
Adult obesity (2020)	34%	33%	32%	36%	35%	35%	31%	33%
Food environment index (2019 & 2020)	8.5	9.3	8.7	8.4	8.9	8.3	9.0	8.8
Physical inactivity (2020)	20%	19%	19%	21%	21%	22%	19%	20%
Access to exercise opportunities (2022 & 2020)	61%	87%	86%	57%	79%	47%	86%	84%
Excessive drinking (2020)	28%	22%	27%	26%	28%	26%	22%	26%
Alcohol-impaired driving deaths (2016-2020)	43%	11%	35%	32%	42%	57%	30%	36%
Sexually transmitted infections (2020)	153.5	204.3	494.8	259.4	300.2	236.8	392.1	456.2
Teen births (2014-2020)	8	8	7	18	19	7	12	14
Selected Trends								
Adult obesity								
Physical inactivity	Trends for adult obesity and physical activity were not available for the current report. As of the 2021 Compass Now report, both indicators were getting worse.							
Alcohol-impaired driving deaths	--	--	W	--	--	W	--	--
Sexually transmitted infections	W	W	W	W	W	W	--	--

Trend Key: B Getting better   -- No trend   W Getting worse

*Note: Houston County is ranked among all Minnesota counties. Other counties are ranked among all Wisconsin counties.

Source: University of Wisconsin-Madison Population Health Institute. County Health Rankings.

Retrieved in July 2023 from http://www.countyhealthrankings.org

Exhibit 4.2a shows a set of youth health behavior risk indicators for four of the five Wisconsin counties in the 2020-21 school year. Comparable data were not reported for Vernon County, and additional data from a separate survey effort in Houston County are summarized in **Exhibit 4.2b.** Focusing on available data for the four Wisconsin counties:

- The indicators are based on anonymous survey responses by high school students on a range of youth risk factors as of the 2020-2021 school year.
- The indicators shown include alcohol and drug use, auto safety, mental health, personal safety, sense of belonging, sexual activity, and sleep, nutrition, and exercise.
- The indicators vary by county, but indicate significant numbers of youth are experiencing or engaging in health risk situations.

Exhibit 4.2a Youth Risk Profile – Wisconsin Counties

	BU	LC	MO	TR	VE	HO
Total Survey Responses (2020-2021 School Year)	480	3,645	765	974	--	--
a. Alcohol and Drugs						
Were offered, sold, or given drugs on school property past 12 months.	8%	8%	7%	11%	--	--
Attended school under influence of alcohol past 12 months.	7%	6%	8%	7%	--	--
Had at least one drink of alcohol past 30 days.	33%	19%	23%	28%	--	--
Used marijuana in past 30 days.	13%	11%	12%	10%	--	--
Ever misused over-the-counter and/or prescription drugs.	4%	10%	12%	11%	--	--
b. Auto Safety						
Never or rarely use seatbelt.	6%	4%	6%	8%	--	--
Drove after drinking past 30 days.	3%	3%	4%	5%	--	--
Texted or emailed while driving past 30 days.	46%	40%	37%	41%	--	--
Texted and/or drank while driving past 30 days.	48%	40%	38%	41%	--	--
Rode with a driver who had been drinking.	20%	13%	16%	17%	--	--
c. Mental Health						
Experienced significant problems with anxiety past 12 months.	42%	49%	50%	47%	--	--
Experienced prolonged, disruptive sadness past 12 months.	28%	31%	33%	31%	--	--
Intentionally self-harmed without intending to die past 12 months.	22%	20%	23%	22%	--	--
Seriously considered suicide past 12 months.	15%	17%	17%	18%	--	--
Made a plan for suicide attempt past 12 months.	10%	13%	15%	15%	--	--
Said they rarely or never get the help they need.	58%	51%	58%	60%	--	--
Report ever having lived with someone with a mental illness.	31%	40%	41%	37%	--	--
d. Personal Safety						
Rarely or never feel safe at school.	10%	10%	13%	13%	--	--
Agree or strongly agree violence is a problem at their school.	8%	18%	17%	19%	--	--
In or fight and/or threatened with a weapon at school.	13%	12%	12%	14%	--	--
Experienced bullying at school past 12 months.	25%	17%	21%	25%	--	--
Bullied online past 12 months.	20%	17%	17%	17%	--	--
Agree or strongly agree bullying is a problem as school.	39%	41%	39%	37%	--	--
Experienced rape, sexual assault, or intimate partner violence.	15%	15%	17%	15%	--	--

Exhibit 4.2a Youth Risk Profile – Wisconsin Counties (cont.)

	BU	LC	MO	TR	VE	HO
e. Sense of Belonging						
Said they did not feel like they belonged at their school.	17%	13%	15%	15%	--	--
Feel they do not have a teacher or other adult at school they can talk to.	15%	16%	16%	18%	--	--
Do participate in school activities, teams, or clubs.	75%	67%	58%	73%	--	--
f. Sexual Activity						
Sexually active past 3 months.	29%	18%	22%	21%	--	--
Sexually active past 3 months 11th grade.	36%	23%	28%	32%	--	--
Sexually active past 3 months 12th grade.	49%	33%	36%	32%	--	--
Among sexually active students, no birth control.	4%	7%	9%	9%	--	--
Engaged in sexting past 30 days.	20%	15%	20%	19%	--	--
g. Sleep, Nutrition, Exercise						
Sleep 8 or more hours per night.	31%	27%	28%	32%	--	--
Reported 5 or fewer hours of sleep per night.	13%	16%	19%	18%	--	--
Exercised zero days in past week.	8%	11%	13%	14%	--	--
Ate fruit every day past 7 days.	39%	50%	42%	42%	--	--
Ate vegetables every day past 7 days.	38%	47%	37%	41%	--	--
Drank plain water every day past 7 days.	79%	80%	75%	77%	--	--
Ate breakfast every day past 7 days.	33%	33%	28%	30%	--	--
Experienced hunger due to lack of food at home past 30 days.	18%	21%	21%	23%	--	--
Use technology between midnight and 5 am on school nights.	50%	50%	51%	48%	--	--
Used vaping products past 30 days.	20%	12%	16%	16%	--	--
Used tobacco products past 30 days.	8%	4%	5%	6%	--	--

Note: "--" means Comparable data not available for Vernon County and Houston County

Source: Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, County-Level Youth Risk Behavior Survey Reports, 2020-2021 school year.

> " I am also concerned with the use of technology and social media, especially in regards to young people and how it is impacting their mental health. "
>
> ~ Vernon County Survey Respondent

Exhibit **4.2b** shows a set of youth health behavior risk indicators for Houston County in the 2021-22 school year. These indicators were developed using a different survey instrument and sampling methodology than was used in Wisconsin.

- The indicators shown include personal safety; adverse childhood experience; food, physical activity, and sleep; mental health; and substance use.
- As in the Wisconsin counties, the Houston County results indicate significant numbers of youth are experiencing or engaging in health risk situations.

Exhibit 4.2b Youth Risk Profile – Houston County

	9th Grade Male	9th Grade Female	11th Grade Male	11th Grade Female
Total Survey Responses (2021-22 School Year)	187 (male and female)		154 (male and female)	
a. Personal Safety				
Disagree with "I feel safe at school"	9%	14%	7%	7%
Been cyber-bullied at least once in the last 30 days	14%	18%	8%	10%
Been in a casual or serious relationship where your partner physically hurt you on purpose	2%	6%	7%	4%
b. ACES (Adverse Childhood Experiences) items				
Live with anyone who drinks too much alcohol	13%	15%	13%	12%
Live with anyone who uses illegal drugs or abuses prescription drugs	5%	3%	2%	8%
Live with anyone who is depressed or has other mental health issues	14%	45%	15%	43%
Had a parent or other adult in your home regularly swear at you insult you, or put you down.	6%	26%	11%	18%
Had a parent or other adult in your home ever hit, beat, kicked, or physically hurt you in any way.	12%	10%	8%	9%
Had parents or other adults in your home ever slapped, hit, kicked, punched, or beat each other up?	2%	16%	5%	11%
Had anyone who was not a relative / family member ever pressured, tricked, or forced you to do something sexual or done something sexual to you against your will.	2%	4%	0%	7%
Had a relative / family member ever pressured, tricked, or forced you to do something sexual or done something sexual to you against your will.	1%	1%	0%	7%
Ever traded sex or sexual activity to receive money, food, drugs, alcohol, a place to stay, or anything else?	2%	1%	0%	3%
c. Food, Physical Activity, and Sleep				
During past 30 days, had to skip meals because family did not have enough money to buy food.	1%	1%	0%	4%
Not physically activity for at least 60 minutes in the last 7 days.	5%	14%	0%	3%
Typically get less 6 or less hours of sleep on a school night.	19%	37%	31%	35%
d. Mental Health				
During past 12 months, ever do something to purposely hurt or injure yourself without wanting to die, such as cutting, burning, or bruising yourself on purpose?	16%	22%	18%	22%
Ever seriously considered attempting suicide.	14%	28%	11%	24%
Ever attempted suicide.	6%	4%	5%	7%
d. Substance Use				
Used conventional tobacco products, past 30 days.	4%	6%	3%	3%
Use tobacco products including e-cigarettes and hookah, past 30 days.	10%	10%	10%	16%
Use of alcohol or any drug use during the past year.	32%	24%	41%	41%

Source: Minnesota Student Survey County Tables, 2021-22 School Year, Minnesota Student Survey Interagency Team: Minnesota Department of Education Minnesota Department of Health Minnesota Department of Human Services Minnesota Department of Public Safety.

Community Insights

Exhibit 4.3 shows ratings of personal health by community survey respondents. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. Summary ratings at the regional level include
  a. 27% rated their overall health as poor or fair
  b. 31% rated their overall mental health as poor or fair
  c. 26% rated their overall dental health as poor or fair

Exhibit 4.3 Ratings of Personal Health

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Survey Responses	91	86	529	223	87	204	1,220
a. Your overall health							
Poor	5%	0%	2%	5%	9%	3%	3%
Fair	21%	28%	23%	32%	13%	19%	24%
Good	57%	59%	54%	56%	68%	58%	57%
Excellent	16%	13%	21%	7%	10%	20%	17%
b. Your overall mental health							
Poor	2%	7%	5%	8%	7%	3%	5%
Fair	33%	24%	26%	28%	21%	21%	26%
Good	54%	56%	49%	51%	62%	49%	51%
Excellent	11%	13%	20%	13%	10%	27%	18%
c. Your overall dental health							
Poor	2%	3%	10%	11%	12%	6%	8%
Fair	26%	14%	16%	23%	15%	17%	18%
Good	55%	58%	44%	50%	51%	50%	48%
Excellent	16%	24%	30%	17%	22%	27%	25%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.

Exhibit 4.4 shows self-reported ratings of concern about health issues in the community. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. The percent saying they were very or moderately concerned about each topic at the regional level included:

- a. 83% mental health in the community
- b. 71% mental health stigma
- c. 71% suicide
- d. 78% alcohol use
- e. 69% prescription drug misuse
- f. 85% illegal drug use
- g. 74% obesity
- h. 53% tobacco use
- i. 65% e-cigarette use / vaping

Exhibit 4.4 Concerns about Health Issues in the Community

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Survey Responses	92	87	535	225	87	203	1,229
a. Mental health							
Very Concerned	34%	46%	60%	52%	44%	43%	52%
Moderately Concerned	37%	33%	27%	28%	28%	38%	31%
A Little Concerned	18%	20%	10%	12%	22%	12%	13%
Not Concerned	11%	1%	2%	5%	6%	5%	4%
No Opinion	0%	0%	0%	2%	1%	1%	1%
b. Mental health stigma							
Very Concerned	30%	39%	36%	42%	41%	31%	36%
Moderately Concerned	32%	34%	36%	34%	26%	39%	35%
A Little Concerned	26%	20%	19%	13%	22%	21%	19%
Not Concerned	11%	5%	7%	7%	9%	7%	7%
No Opinion	1%	2%	2%	4%	2%	2%	2%
c. Suicide							
Very Concerned	28%	26%	41%	36%	24%	25%	34%
Moderately Concerned	29%	40%	38%	32%	43%	43%	37%
A Little Concerned	32%	28%	16%	25%	24%	18%	21%
Not Concerned	9%	5%	4%	7%	8%	10%	7%
No Opinion	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	3%	2%
d. Alcohol use							
Very Concerned	38%	40%	53%	45%	37%	34%	45%
Moderately Concerned	28%	34%	31%	32%	32%	41%	33%
A Little Concerned	17%	15%	11%	14%	22%	16%	14%
Not Concerned	15%	10%	5%	7%	7%	7%	7%
No Opinion	1%	0%	1%	1%	2%	1%	1%
e. Prescription drug misuse							
Very Concerned	21%	31%	38%	42%	23%	26%	34%
Moderately Concerned	34%	34%	37%	29%	34%	38%	35%
A Little Concerned	29%	20%	17%	19%	26%	26%	21%
Not Concerned	11%	10%	7%	6%	7%	7%	7%
No Opinion	5%	5%	2%	4%	9%	2%	3%
f. Illegal drug use							
Very Concerned	59%	52%	66%	61%	52%	52%	60%
Moderately Concerned	21%	26%	22%	26%	31%	29%	25%
A Little Concerned	14%	15%	7%	8%	10%	14%	10%
Not Concerned	3%	5%	4%	4%	3%	2%	3%
No Opinion	3%	2%	1%	1%	3%	3%	2%

Exhibit 4.4 Concerns about Health Issues in the Community (cont.)

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
g. Obesity							
Very Concerned	35%	33%	34%	32%	37%	45%	35%
Moderately Concerned	34%	48%	40%	38%	40%	35%	39%
A Little Concerned	25%	16%	18%	22%	10%	16%	18%
Not Concerned	7%	2%	7%	5%	10%	3%	6%
No Opinion	0%	0%	1%	3%	2%	1%	1%
h. Tobacco Use							
Very Concerned	14%	26%	20%	24%	19%	22%	21%
Moderately Concerned	32%	35%	31%	34%	31%	35%	32%
A Little Concerned	30%	29%	33%	23%	25%	30%	30%
Not Concerned	22%	10%	15%	14%	23%	10%	15%
No Opinion	2%	0%	1%	5%	2%	2%	2%
i. e-cigarette Use / Vaping							
Very Concerned	29%	37%	33%	35%	33%	32%	33%
Moderately Concerned	26%	31%	32%	34%	25%	35%	32%
A Little Concerned	29%	29%	21%	18%	17%	21%	21%
Not Concerned	12%	2%	12%	9%	21%	9%	11%
No Opinion	3%	0%	2%	4%	3%	3%	3%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.

> " We don't have enough addiction and/ or mental health treatment resources in the wider area. When people want help, it doesn't seem like they have a place to go for in-patient treatment.
>
> ~ Vernon County Survey Respondent "

5. Health Care

Access to affordable, quality, and timely health care can help prevent diseases and detect issues sooner, enabling individuals to live longer, healthier lives. This section describes selected community indicators and community insights about health care access and utilization.

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Community Indicators

Exhibit 5.1 shows the County Health Rankings for clinical care. The rankings are based on a set of indicators including uninsured rates, health care provider supply, preventable hospital stays, mammography screening, and flu shots. Houston County, La Crosse County, and Monroe County rank in the 1st quartile statewide. Trempealeau County ranks in the 3rd quartile for Wisconsin, and Buffalo County and Vernon County rank in the fourth quartile. Trends indicate that all of the counties are improving or stable on multiple indicators of clinical care, with the exception of primary care clinician supply.

Exhibit 5.1 County Health Rankings for Clinical Care

	BU	HO*	LC	MO	TR	VE	MN*	WI
Rankings								
Clinical Care Rank	60	14	1	17	38	57	--	--

Ranking Key: █ **1st (best) quartile** █ **2nd quartile** █ **3rd quartile** █ **4th quartile**

	BU	HO*	LC	MO	TR	VE	MN*	WI
Indicators								
Uninsured (2020)	8%	5%	6%	9%	8%	12%	6%	7%
Primary care physicians (2020)	4,340:1	1,690:1	710:1	1,610:1	3,710:1	1,000:1	1,110:1	1,240:1
Dentists (2021)	780:1	1,880:1	1,020:1	1,540:1	3,410:1	3,090:1	1,310:1	1,380:1
Mental health providers (2022)	13,300:1	2,680:1	280:1	480:1	1,920:1	640:1	320:1	420:1
Preventable hospital stays (2020)	2,965	1,817	1,928	1,510	1,787	1,872	2,323	2,559
Mammography screening Medicare only (2020)	43%	53%	55%	53%	50%	42%	45%	43%
Flu vaccinations (2020)	50%	65%	64%	44%	49%	39%	57%	56%
Selected Trends								
Uninsured	B	B	B	B	B	B	--	--
Primary care physicians	W	--	--	--	W	B	--	--
Dentists	B	B	B	B	B	B	--	--
Preventable hospital stays	--	--	B	B	--	B	--	--
Mammography screening	--	--	--	--	--	B	--	--
Flu vaccinations	--	B	B	B	B	B	--	--

Trend Key: █ B **Getting better** -- **No trend** █ W **Getting worse**

*Note: Houston County is ranked among all Minnesota counties. Other counties are ranked among all Wisconsin counties.

Source: University of Wisconsin-Madison Population Health Institute. County Health Rankings. Retrieved in July 2023 from http://www.countyhealthrankings.org

> " I am aging and I worry that I might need to move to assisted living or a nursing home and there is a big shortage of staff for the places in this community. I would like to see more help for those training to work in healthcare so that there are more people available to staff such facilities. "
>
> ~ Vernon County Survey Respondent

Exhibit 5.2 shows selected cancer screening rates for each county within the region. Note that rates shown are estimates, and apparent differences may be within the estimation margin of error.

- Estimates range from 71% to 76% for breast cancer screening (mammogram)
- Estimates range from 73% to 84% for cervical cancer screening
- Estimates range from 59% to 61% for colorectal cancer screening

Exhibit 5.2 Cancer Screening Rates

	BU	HO*	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION	MN	WI
Year	2020	2017-19	2020	2020	2020	2020		2020	2020
Mammogram in past 2 years (50-74y/o)	74%	72%	76%	72%	74%	71%	--	79%	78%
Cervical cancer screening up-to-date (21-64y/o)	83%	73%	84%	83%	82%	82%	--	77%	78%
Colorectal cancer screening up to date (50-75y/o)	61%	--	59%	59%	60%	59%	--	--	67%

Note: Houston County data modeled from 2017-2019. "--" means not reported in public sources.

Source: Wisconsin data from Wisconsin Cancer Collaborative, Interactive County Cancer Data Dashboard. Minnesota data from National Cancer Institute State Cancer Profiles https://statecancerprofiles.cancer.gov/index.html.

Community Insights

Exhibit 5.3 shows self-reported responses to questions about health coverage. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. Summary ratings at the regional level include:
- a. 6% reported any household members without health coverage
- b. 20% reported any household members with Medicaid coverage
- c. 27% reported any household members with Medicare coverage
- d. 19% reported any household members with private insurance coverage
- e. 59% any household members with employer-based coverage

Exhibit 5.3 Self-Reported Health Coverage

Topic/Survey	BU	HO*	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
a. Do all members of your household have health coverage?							
Total Survey Responses	92	86	528	220	86	202	1,214
Yes, all members of my household have health coverage.	98%	88%	94%	93%	90%	96%	94%
No, one or more members of my household do not have health coverage.	2%	12%	6%	7%	10%	4%	6%
b. Do any members of your household have the following types of health insurance? (Choose all that apply)							
Total Survey Responses	92	83	527	222	87	200	1,211
Medicaid	20%	18%	21%	20%	32%	15%	20%
Medicare	20%	27%	29%	19%	25%	35%	27%
Private Insurance	17%	17%	20%	17%	20%	23%	19%
Employer Based Insurance	71%	52%	55%	63%	67%	58%	59%
Other	5%	1%	6%	6%	3%	6%	5%
Not Applicable-No one in my household has health insurance	2%	4%	3%	3%	3%	1%	3%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.

Exhibit 5.4 shows self-reported ratings of health care access and affordability. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. Summary ratings at the regional level include:

  a. 15% reported poor or fair access to healthcare
  b. 36% reported poor or fair ability to pay for healthcare
  c. 41% reported poor or fair access to mental healthcare
  d. 41% reported poor or fair ability to pay for mental healthcare
  e. 23% reported poor or fair access to dental care
  f. 35% reported poor or fair ability to pay for dental care

Exhibit 5.4 Ratings of Health Care Access and Affordability

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Survey Responses	91	86	529	223	87	204	1,220
a. Your access to healthcare							
Poor	4%	0%	2%	2%	6%	1%	2%
Fair	20%	17%	11%	20%	13%	9%	13%
Good	46%	49%	39%	48%	49%	43%	43%
Excellent	30%	35%	48%	30%	33%	47%	41%
b. Your ability to pay for healthcare							
Poor	11%	5%	13%	13%	13%	9%	12%
Fair	30%	33%	21%	28%	21%	22%	24%
Good	37%	44%	35%	42%	34%	37%	37%
Excellent	22%	19%	30%	16%	32%	32%	27%
c. Your access to mental health care							
Poor	14%	19%	14%	13%	15%	12%	14%
Fair	29%	26%	26%	34%	23%	22%	27%
Good	40%	45%	36%	41%	43%	46%	40%
Excellent	17%	10%	25%	12%	19%	21%	20%
d. Your ability to pay for mental health care							
Poor	19%	3%	17%	17%	15%	11%	15%
Fair	24%	37%	25%	31%	27%	22%	26%
Good	41%	43%	34%	39%	32%	43%	37%
Excellent	16%	16%	24%	12%	26%	24%	21%
e. Your access to dental care							
Poor	5%	6%	10%	12%	12%	7%	9%
Fair	18%	14%	13%	13%	14%	18%	14%
Good	49%	52%	36%	48%	41%	42%	42%
Excellent	27%	28%	41%	26%	34%	32%	34%
f. Your ability to pay for dental care							
Poor	11%	3%	15%	15%	15%	12%	13%
Fair	24%	24%	20%	28%	26%	20%	22%
Good	42%	49%	36%	40%	33%	41%	38%
Excellent	23%	23%	30%	17%	25%	28%	25%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.

Exhibit 5.5 summarizes community survey results about health care sources and obstacles for adults. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. Summary ratings at the regional level include:

    a. 19% cited a hospital emergency room as a usual source of health care
        and 4% reported no usual source of health care

    b. 39% reported one or more obstacles to getting care, such as cost, lack of health coverage,
        difficulty getting appointments, transportation, problems getting child care, or language barrier

Exhibit 5.5 Health Care Sources and Obstacles for Adults

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
a. Usual Source of health care for adults							
Total Survey Responses	92	85	529	222	89	202	1,219
Doctor's office	47%	52%	54%	53%	55%	54%	53%
Clinic	57%	73%	60%	58%	67%	70%	63%
Express care in a grocery or drug store	0%	9%	14%	2%	3%	3%	8%
Urgent care	47%	27%	41%	41%	36%	34%	39%
Free clinic	4%	2%	5%	12%	1%	6%	6%
Hospital emergency room	14%	9%	18%	22%	24%	25%	19%
VA Medical Center	2%	2%	1%	8%	4%	3%	3%
VA Outpatient Clinic	3%	0%	3%	5%	3%	0%	3%
Internet	9%	8%	14%	9%	12%	12%	12%
I do not have a place that I go to most often	4%	0%	5%	5%	6%	3%	4%
b. Obstacles to health care for adults							
Total Survey Responses	87	86	519	219	85	196	1.192
Could not afford the cost	18%	23%	15%	21%	13%	13%	16%
Did not have insurance	7%	9%	4%	7%	9%	4%	6%
Did not have transportation	3%	2%	3%	5%	4%	5%	4%
Could not schedule the appointment at a convenient time	17%	22%	26%	28%	21%	22%	24%
There was a language barrier	0%	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
I could not get child care	3%	1%	5%	3%	4%	2%	4%
None of the above apply to me	63%	47%	64%	52%	64%	67%	61%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.

Exhibit 5.6 summarizes community survey results about dental care visits and obstacles for adults. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. Summary ratings at the regional level include:

    a. 15% said they have not seen a dentist within the past 2 years
    b. 31% reported one or more obstacles to getting dental care, such as cost, lack of health coverage,
        difficulty getting appointments, transportation, problems getting child care, or language

Exhibit 5.6 Dental Visits and Obstacles for Adults

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
a. How long has it been since you have seen a dentist for any reason?							
Total Survey Responses	92	86	530	222	87	203	1,220
Within the past year	76%	85%	75%	71%	67%	74%	74%
Within the past 2 years	9%	10%	9%	11%	13%	6%	9%
Within the past 5 years	7%	1%	8%	9%	10%	9%	8%
5 or more years	7%	3%	7%	8%	9%	9%	7%
Don't know	2%	0%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%

Exhibit 5.6 Dental Visits and Obstacles for Adults (cont.)

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
b. In the last 12 months, was there any time when you needed to see a dentist but did not because of any of the following reasons?							
Total Survey Responses	89	84	517	219	82	198	1,189
Could not afford the cost	20%	25%	19%	19%	22%	18%	19%
Did not have insurance	10%	5%	10%	11%	11%	7%	10%
Did not have transportation	1%	4%	3%	4%	4%	2%	3%
Could not schedule the appointment at a convenient time	10%	6%	13%	12%	12%	11%	12%
There was a language barrier	0%	0%	1%	2%	0%	1%	1%
I could not get child care	1%	5%	2%	2%	5%	1%	2%
None of the above apply to me	71%	62%	71%	65%	65%	73%	69%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.

Exhibit 5.7 summarizes community survey results about health care and dental visits for children. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. Summary ratings at the regional level include:
   a. 10% cited a hospital emergency room as a usual source of care for children
   b. 6% reported children were without a dental visit in past two years

Exhibit 5.7 Health Care and Dental Visits for Children

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
a. Usual source of health care for children							
Total Survey Responses	72	75	285	199	74	129	950
Doctor's office	58%	55%	62%	53%	59%	45%	28%
Clinic	58%	47%	50%	60%	70%	73%	29%
Express care in a grocery or drug store	3%	8%	19%	5%	3%	6%	5%
Urgent care	50%	20%	47%	39%	30%	42%	20%
Free clinic	3%	8%	9%	10%	0%	11%	4%
Hospital emergency room	13%	8%	20%	19%	32%	21%	10%
Internet	3%	6%	4%	4%	5%	8%	2%
We do not have a place that we go to most often	3%	0%	4%	2%	0%	2%	1%
b. Most recent dental visit for children							
Total Survey Responses	38	47	184	107	34	64	474
Within the past year	74%	87%	83%	70%	76%	78%	78%
Within the past 2 years	13%	11%	9%	16%	9%	9%	11%
Within the past 5 years	8%	2%	1%	7%	3%	6%	4%
5 or more years	3%	0%	3%	1%	3%	2%	2%
Don't know	3%	0%	4%	6%	9%	5%	4%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.

6. Social and Economic Factors

Social and economic factors, such as income, education, employment, and social supports can significantly affect community health and quality of life. This section describes selected community indicators and community insights related to social and economic factors.
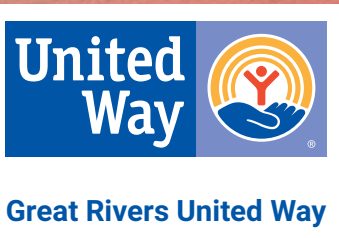
United Way

Great Rivers United Way

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Community Indicators

Exhibit 6.1 shows the County Health Rankings for social and economic factors. The rankings are based on a set of indicators related to education, income, family structure, social associations, and injury deaths. Summary results at the regional level include:

- Houston County and La Crosse County rank in the 1st quartile within their states.
- Buffalo County, Monroe County, and Trempealeau County rank in the 2nd quartile, and Vernon County ranks in the 3rd quartile.

Exhibit 6.1 County Health Rankings for Social and Economic Factors

	BU	HO*	LC	MO	TR	VE	MN*	WI
Rankings								
Social & Economic Factors Rank	27	11	10	36	24	47	--	--

Ranking Key: ■ 1st (best) quartile   ■ 2nd quartile   ■ 3rd quartile   ■ 4th quartile

	BU	HO*	LC	MO	TR	VE	MN*	WI
Indicators								
High school graduation (2017-2021)	92%	95%	96%	91%	92%	90%	94%	93%
Some college (2017-2021)	65%	74%	77%	60%	60%	58%	76%	70%
Unemployment (2021)	4.2%	2.9%	3.0%	3.2%	3.7%	3.2%	3.4%	3.8%
Children in poverty (2021)	11%	9%	11%	15%	12%	23%	11%	14%
Income inequality (2017-2021)	3.9	3.7	4.2	3.8	3.4	4.4	4.2	4.2
Children in single-parent households (2017-2021)	15%	16%	18%	17%	15%	14%	20%	23%
Social Associations (2020)	9.2	13.4	13.2	9.4	13.1	11.7	12.4	11.2
Injury deaths (2016-2020)	55	68	83	69	74	68	69	89
Selected Trends								
Unemployment	--	B	--	--	--	B	--	--
Children in poverty	--	--	B	--	--	W	--	--

Trend Key: **B** Getting better   -- No trend   **W** Getting worse

Source: University of Wisconsin-Madison Population Health Institute. County Health Rankings. Retrieved in July 2023 from https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/.
:*Note: Houston County is ranked among all Minnesota counties. Other counties are ranked among all Wisconsin counties.

> " I work from pay check to pay check just to make a living. And then I don't have no money to myself. That's why I cant retire and enjoy life anymore!!
>
> ~ Monroe County Survey Respondent "

Exhibit 6.2 shows data on low-income households and ALICE households. Summary results at the regional level include:
- Across the region there were an estimated 11,215 households with income at or below poverty in 2021. This represents an estimated 11 percent of all households.
- ALICE is an acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed, and provides a way of defining and understanding the struggles of households that earn above the Federal Poverty Level, but not enough to afford basic necessities. In 2021 an estimated 24,115 households across the five Wisconsin counties were classified as ALICE households.

Exhibit 6.2 Low Income and ALICE Households

	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION	MN	WI
Households in Poverty (2021)									
Households (count)	538	617	5,963	1,834	958	1,643	11,215	206,178	267,433
Households (%)	10%	8%	12%	10%	8%	14%	11%	9%	11%
ALICE Households (2021)									
ALICE Households (count)	1,310	--	13,582	4,429	2,979	3,125	24,115	--	567,854
ALICE Households (%)	24%	24%	27%	25%	24%	26%	--	26%	23%

Source: Data on households in poverty from ESRI obtained through ArcGIS Business software. Data on ALICE Households from https://www.unitedforalice.org/county-reports/wisconsin

Exhibit 6.3 shows reported child services cases for 2021, including child abuse and neglect cases. Across the five Wisconsin counties, in 2021 there were 2,243 referrals made to Child Protective Services; 116 documented child abuse victims; and 210 out-of-home placements.

Exhibit 6.3 Reported Child Services Cases

	BU	HO*	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION	MN*	WI
CPS Referrals (2021)									
CPS Referrals	190	--	699	814	491	239	2,243	--	74,280
Child Abuse Cases (2021)									
Child Abuse Victims	22	--	38	34	26	18	116	--	4,254
Child abuse rate per 1,000 children	8.4	--	1.6	2.9	3.5	2.3	--	--	3.4
Out of home Placements (2021)									
Out of Home Placements	12	--	97	58	19	24	210	--	6,887

Note: CPS Referrals and Child Abuse Cases for Minnesota were not included in this report as definitions for cases and referrals in Minnesota may vary from Wisconsin definitions. For more information on Minnesota Maltreatment data, visit https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/edocs/child-protection-foster-care-adoption/

Source: Wisconsin Child Abuse and Neglect Report Annual Report for Calendar Year 2021 to the Governor and Legislature Wis. Stat. s. 48.47(8). Also, Wisconsin Department of Children and Families Out-of-Home Care (Otte) Dashboard.

Community Insights

Exhibit 6.4 summarizes community survey results about caring for individuals who are aging or have disabilities. Results are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. Summary results at the regional level include:
  a. 25% currently help care for an individual that is aging
  b. 19% currently help care for an individual that has a disability

Exhibit 6.4 Caring for Vulnerable Persons

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
a. Do you currently help care for an individual that is aging?							
Total Survey Responses	92	86	525	221	86	204	1,214
Yes	24%	45%	20%	30%	26%	24%	25%
No	76%	55%	80%	70%	74%	76%	75%
b. Do you currently help care for an individual that has a disability?							
Total Survey Responses	92	86	528	221	85	203	1,215
Yes	20%	33%	16%	24%	21%	15%	19%
No	80%	67%	84%	76%	79%	85%	81%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.

Exhibit 6.5 summarizes community survey results regarding concerns about vulnerable persons in the community. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. The percent saying they were very or moderately concerned about each topic at the regional level were:
  a. 70% child abuse
  b. 71% domestic abuse
  c. 61% elder abuse
  d. 69% sexual abuse

Exhibit 6.5 Issues Affecting Vulnerable Persons

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Survey Responses	91	87	532	225	88	204	1,227
a. Child abuse							
Very Concerned	24%	29%	45%	37%	25%	31%	37%
Moderately Concerned	36%	31%	30%	32%	34%	38%	33%
A Little Concerned	32%	29%	18%	23%	23%	24%	22%
Not Concerned	5%	7%	4%	6%	9%	3%	5%
No Opinion	2%	3%	3%	2%	9%	4%	3%
b. Domestic abuse							
Very Concerned	29%	36%	44%	35%	26%	28%	37%
Moderately Concerned	33%	28%	32%	31%	40%	43%	34%
A Little Concerned	29%	30%	16%	27%	22%	21%	21%
Not Concerned	8%	5%	5%	5%	8%	4%	5%
No Opinion	2%	2%	3%	2%	5%	4%	3%
c. Elder abuse							
Very Concerned	27%	28%	35%	27%	18%	24%	29%
Moderately Concerned	32%	30%	32%	30%	39%	34%	32%
A Little Concerned	27%	31%	22%	31%	26%	28%	26%
Not Concerned	10%	9%	8%	9%	9%	8%	9%
No Opinion	3%	2%	4%	4%	8%	5%	4%

Exhibit 6.5 Issues Affecting Vulnerable Persons (cont.)

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
d. Sexual abuse or sexual violence							
Very Concerned	26%	33%	45%	35%	25%	26%	36%
Moderately Concerned	33%	28%	33%	32%	31%	37%	33%
A Little Concerned	29%	28%	15%	25%	29%	25%	22%
Not Concerned	7%	9%	4%	6%	8%	5%	5%
No Opinion	6%	2%	2%	1%	7%	6%	3%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.

Exhibit 6.6 summarizes community survey results about community supports for vulnerable persons. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. Topics receiving ratings of poor or fair at the regional level included:

a. 39% for their community as a place that meets the overall needs of children
b. 48% for efforts to prevent abuse or neglect
c. 51% for their community as a place that meets the overall needs of elderly persons
d. 45% for efforts to prevent neglect or abuse of seniors
e. 51% for efforts to help persons age in place
f. 51% for efforts to meet the overall needs of persons with disabilities
g. 46% for efforts to prevent neglect or abuse of persons with disabilities
h. 51% for the availability of services that meet the overall needs of community members who are victims of abuse or neglect

Exhibit 6.6 Community Supports for Vulnerable Persons

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Survey Responses	91	85	532	226	87	205	1,226
a. Your community as a place that meets the overall needs of children							
Poor	12%	4%	6%	10%	1%	4%	7%
Fair	36%	31%	24%	46%	40%	32%	32%
Good	44%	48%	52%	35%	41%	50%	47%
Excellent	5%	16%	10%	5%	9%	7%	9%
No Opinion	2%	1%	7%	4%	8%	6%	6%
b. Efforts to prevent abuse or neglect of children							
Poor	10%	4%	10%	14%	5%	8%	10%
Fair	41%	33%	36%	44%	41%	37%	38%
Good	38%	41%	39%	31%	36%	41%	38%
Excellent	2%	13%	6%	5%	2%	3%	5%
No Opinion	9%	9%	9%	6%	16%	11%	9%
c. Your community as a place that meets the overall needs of elderly persons (e.g., access to transportation, social outlets)							
Poor	27%	15%	10%	15%	23%	20%	15%
Fair	32%	27%	35%	44%	31%	37%	36%
Good	31%	36%	41%	30%	34%	32%	36%
Excellent	2%	18%	8%	6%	6%	8%	8%
No Opinion	8%	4%	5%	4%	6%	3%	5%

Exhibit 6.6 Community Supports for Vulnerable Persons (cont.)

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
d. Efforts to prevent abuse or neglect of seniors							
Poor	18%	6%	9%	13%	7%	8%	10%
Fair	32%	32%	32%	40%	36%	44%	35%
Good	40%	39%	38%	28%	34%	31%	35%
Excellent	1%	13%	7%	5%	7%	5%	6%
No Opinion	10%	11%	15%	14%	16%	12%	13%
e. The availability of resources to help persons age in place							
Poor	23%	13%	13%	15%	24%	19%	16%
Fair	31%	29%	35%	43%	28%	37%	35%
Good	37%	36%	31%	27%	32%	28%	31%
Excellent	2%	12%	6%	5%	6%	8%	6%
No Opinion	7%	9%	14%	10%	10%	8%	11%
f. Your community as a place that meets the overall needs of persons with disabilities							
Poor	19%	6%	10%	13%	17%	15%	12%
Fair	46%	28%	37%	48%	31%	40%	39%
Good	27%	40%	37%	29%	34%	36%	34%
Excellent	4%	14%	7%	3%	5%	2%	6%
No Opinion	3%	12%	9%	8%	13%	7%	9%
g. Efforts to prevent abuse or neglect of persons with disabilities							
Poor	10%	4%	11%	10%	8%	11%	10%
Fair	40%	27%	32%	44%	38%	39%	36%
Good	36%	41%	36%	29%	33%	30%	33%
Excellent	2%	15%	6%	3%	3%	4%	5%
No Opinion	12%	13%	16%	13%	17%	17%	15%
h. The availability of services that meet the overall needs of community members who are victims of abuse or neglect							
Poor	17%	5%	13%	16%	15%	18%	14%
Fair	38%	36%	36%	42%	33%	40%	37%
Good	30%	35%	34%	25%	32%	23%	30%
Excellent	3%	14%	4%	4%	3%	4%	5%
No Opinion	12%	9%	14%	12%	16%	15%	13%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.

Exhibit 6.7 summarizes community survey results about meeting household needs. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. The percent saying they were very or moderately concerned about each topic at the regional level included:

a. 18% meeting basic needs for food, housing, and clothing
b. 20% paying the rent or mortgage
c. 22% paying for utility bills, property taxes, or other household expenses
d. 24% being able to access housing
e. 18% availability of resources to help them budget their money
f. 34% paying for educational expenses
g. 23% paying for vehicle expenses
h. 31% paying for legal assistance
i. 24% paying for child care, if needed
j. 29% access to child care, if needed

Exhibit 6.7 Concerns about Meeting Household Needs

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Survey Responses	91	86	530	223	87	205	1,222
a. Your ability to meet your household's basic needs for food, housing, clothing							
Very Concerned	4%	7%	10%	8%	7%	5%	8%
Moderately Concerned	9%	20%	10%	12%	10%	7%	10%
A Little Concerned	24%	22%	19%	28%	11%	17%	21%
Not Concerned	62%	51%	60%	52%	71%	69%	60%
No Opinion	1%	0%	1%	0%	0%	2%	1%
b. Your ability to pay for rent/mortgage for your household							
Very Concerned	3%	10%	11%	10%	10%	6%	9%
Moderately Concerned	9%	23%	9%	15%	10%	6%	11%
A Little Concerned	19%	16%	19%	24%	9%	19%	19%
Not Concerned	66%	50%	60%	50%	70%	65%	59%
No Opinion	3%	0%	1%	1%	0%	4%	2%
c. Your ability to pay for utility bills, property tax, and other housing related expenses							
Very Concerned	3%	13%	13%	12%	11%	6%	11%
Moderately Concerned	11%	22%	10%	16%	9%	6%	11%
A Little Concerned	27%	15%	21%	23%	15%	24%	21%
Not Concerned	56%	50%	55%	48%	64%	61%	55%
No Opinion	3%	0%	1%	0%	0%	2%	1%
d. Your ability to access housing							
Very Concerned	3%	16%	14%	15%	14%	13%	13%
Moderately Concerned	11%	14%	10%	15%	11%	7%	11%
A Little Concerned	15%	16%	14%	17%	12%	12%	14%
Not Concerned	63%	48%	55%	46%	59%	61%	54%
No Opinion	8%	6%	6%	6%	5%	7%	6%
e. The availability of resources to help you budget your money							
Very Concerned	3%	16%	6%	9%	8%	4%	7%
Moderately Concerned	12%	16%	11%	11%	9%	9%	11%
A Little Concerned	16%	18%	17%	23%	19%	21%	19%
Not Concerned	63%	48%	58%	55%	58%	59%	57%
No Opinion	5%	1%	8%	3%	6%	7%	6%
f. Your ability to pay for education beyond high school for you and/or your family							
Very Concerned	10%	16%	19%	23%	19%	14%	18%
Moderately Concerned	22%	24%	14%	17%	15%	14%	16%
A Little Concerned	21%	16%	19%	22%	12%	19%	19%
Not Concerned	40%	36%	37%	29%	43%	42%	37%
No Opinion	8%	7%	11%	9%	12%	11%	10%

Exhibit 6.7 Concerns about Meeting Household Needs (cont.)

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
g. Your ability to pay for your own vehicle (including gas, insurance, and maintenance)							
Very Concerned	5%	14%	10%	11%	13%	7%	10%
Moderately Concerned	10%	18%	15%	15%	9%	9%	13%
A Little Concerned	25%	19%	21%	25%	16%	24%	22%
Not Concerned	58%	48%	53%	48%	58%	59%	53%
No Opinion	1%	0%	2%	1%	3%	1%	2%
h. Your ability to pay for legal assistance							
Very Concerned	11%	19%	16%	20%	19%	12%	16%
Moderately Concerned	15%	30%	13%	17%	14%	12%	15%
A Little Concerned	19%	14%	21%	20%	16%	25%	20%
Not Concerned	47%	36%	41%	36%	44%	46%	41%
No Opinion	8%	1%	10%	8%	7%	5%	8%
i. Your ability to pay for child care, if needed							
Very Concerned	12%	8%	17%	20%	21%	9%	15%
Moderately Concerned	11%	23%	10%	9%	6%	6%	9%
A Little Concerned	12%	12%	7%	11%	7%	11%	9%
Not Concerned	44%	34%	37%	33%	40%	46%	38%
No Opinion	21%	23%	29%	28%	27%	28%	27%
j. Your ability to access childcare, if needed							
Very Concerned	18%	24%	17%	21%	27%	15%	18%
Moderately Concerned	16%	19%	10%	14%	6%	6%	11%
A Little Concerned	8%	8%	10%	8%	6%	9%	9%
Not Concerned	38%	27%	35%	30%	40%	41%	35%
No Opinion	20%	22%	29%	27%	22%	29%	27%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.

> " not enough day cares to fulfill needs, which leaves working/single mothers in a very difficult situation.
>
> ~ Houston County Survey Respondent "

Exhibit 6.8 summarizes community survey results about access to healthy food. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. Summary ratings at the regional level include:

a. 21% rated their access to healthy food as poor or fair
b. 28% rated their ability to pay for healthy food as poor or fair
c. 5% said in the past 12 months, it was often true that the food they bought didn't last and they didn't have money to get more

Exhibit 6.8 Concerns about Access to Healthy Food

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Survey Responses	91	86	529	223	87	204	1,220
a. Your access to healthy food							
Poor	3%	3%	4%	4%	10%	2%	4%
Fair	22%	23%	15%	19%	10%	16%	17%
Good	45%	41%	39%	54%	48%	38%	42%
Excellent	30%	33%	42%	22%	31%	44%	36%
b. Your ability to pay for healthy food							
Poor	7%	3%	9%	10%	8%	4%	7%
Fair	21%	23%	19%	25%	25%	21%	21%
Good	52%	52%	37%	48%	40%	40%	41%
Excellent	21%	21%	36%	18%	27%	34%	29%
c. How True is the following statement for your household? "Within the past 12 months the food we bought just didn't last and we didn't have money to get more."							
Often true	2%	2%	6%	7%	5%	5%	5%
Occasionally true	10%	23%	9%	10%	10%	5%	10%
Sometimes but infrequently true	12%	13%	11%	16%	2%	13%	12%
Never true	76%	62%	74%	67%	83%	77%	73%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.

> "Concerned about homelessness, poverty, hunger and resources for disabled children who are not severe, but rather mild who still need adequate services for success.
>
> ~ La Crosse County Survey Respondent"

Exhibit 6.9 summarizes community survey results about economic issues in the community. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. The percent saying they were very or moderately concerned about each topic at the regional level included:

a. 51% excessive personal debt in the community
b. 22 gambling in the community
c. 35% foreclosure or bankruptcy in the community
d. 40% risk of job loss in the community
e. 69% poverty in the community
f. 63% hunger in the community
g. 66% homelessness in the community

Exhibit 6.9 Concerns about Economic Issues in the Community

Topic/Survey	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Survey Responses	90	85	531	223	87	206	1,222
a. Excessive personal debt							
Very Concerned	15%	16%	24%	20%	16%	20%	20%
Moderately Concerned	33%	31%	33%	29%	28%	29%	31%
A Little Concerned	27%	24%	25%	31%	29%	29%	27%
Not Concerned	20%	18%	13%	11%	11%	14%	13%
No Opinion	6%	12%	7%	9%	16%	9%	8%
b. Gambling (in-person or online)							
Very Concerned	3%	11%	7%	10%	7%	7%	7%
Moderately Concerned	17%	19%	14%	15%	16%	11%	15%
A Little Concerned	29%	27%	34%	31%	23%	31%	31%
Not Concerned	38%	33%	31%	31%	36%	31%	32%
No Opinion	12%	11%	14%	13%	18%	20%	15%
c. Risk of foreclosure or bankruptcy							
Very Concerned	4%	15%	13%	12%	8%	10%	11%
Moderately Concerned	22%	24%	23%	25%	20%	25%	24%
A Little Concerned	36%	28%	34%	34%	29%	32%	33%
Not Concerned	27%	26%	20%	19%	26%	20%	21%
No Opinion	11%	7%	10%	10%	17%	13%	11%
d. Risk of job loss							
Very Concerned	7%	16%	14%	12%	16%	11%	13%
Moderately Concerned	24%	27%	30%	27%	20%	23%	27%
A Little Concerned	31%	22%	30%	36%	31%	36%	32%
Not Concerned	31%	28%	21%	17%	26%	21%	22%
No Opinion	7%	6%	5%	8%	7%	8%	6%
e. Poverty							
Very Concerned	19%	26%	45%	35%	23%	32%	36%
Moderately Concerned	30%	33%	32%	36%	29%	35%	33%
A Little Concerned	33%	24%	16%	20%	30%	21%	21%
Not Concerned	17%	13%	5%	5%	13%	10%	8%
No Opinion	1%	4%	1%	4%	6%	2%	2%
f. Hunger							
Very Concerned	17%	16%	38%	28%	19%	27%	30%
Moderately Concerned	20%	40%	35%	38%	21%	30%	33%
A Little Concerned	37%	29%	18%	22%	35%	26%	24%
Not Concerned	22%	12%	8%	9%	21%	14%	11%
No Opinion	3%	2%	1%	3%	5%	2%	2%
g. Homelessness							
Very Concerned	13%	26%	67%	32%	23%	23%	44%
Moderately Concerned	20%	23%	19%	31%	10%	26%	22%
A Little Concerned	34%	27%	9%	28%	36%	33%	21%
Not Concerned	31%	21%	4%	6%	26%	14%	11%
No Opinion	1%	2%	1%	3%	5%	4%	2%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.

Exhibit 6.10 summarizes community survey results about community supports for economic stability. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. Topics receiving ratings of poor or fair at the regional level included:

    a. 65% rated availability of jobs that offer a livable wage as poor or fair
    b. 79% rated availability of safe and affordable housing as poor or fair
    c. 58% rated availability of services for people who need extra help as poor or fair
    d. 64% rated accessibility of public transportation as poor or fair
    e. 67% rated convenience of public transportation as poor or fair
    f. 69% rated efforts to reduce poverty as poor or fair
    g. 46% rated efforts to reduce hunger as poor or fair

Exhibit 6.10 Community Supports for Economic Stability

Topic/Survey	BU	HO*	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Survey Responses	91	85	530	223	87	206	1,222
a. The availability of jobs that offer a livable wage							
Poor	32%	24%	22%	24%	26%	30%	25%
Fair	42%	42%	38%	43%	36%	45%	40%
Good	21%	25%	33%	26%	28%	19%	27%
Excellent	4%	8%	6%	5%	7%	4%	5%
No Opinion	1%	1%	2%	1%	3%	2%	2%
b. The availability of safe, affordable housing							
Poor	32%	24%	47%	47%	29%	47%	43%
Fair	44%	36%	36%	33%	47%	34%	36%
Good	19%	27%	13%	14%	22%	16%	16%
Excellent	3%	11%	2%	4%	1%	1%	3%
No Opinion	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%
c. The availability of services for people who may need extra help (government, nonprofit services)							
Poor	18%	8%	17%	20%	17%	18%	17%
Fair	43%	34%	40%	41%	34%	46%	41%
Good	23%	39%	31%	27%	31%	27%	30%
Excellent	8%	13%	8%	6%	7%	4%	7%
No Opinion	9%	6%	4%	5%	10%	5%	5%
d. The accessibility of public transportation							
Poor	72%	25%	14%	57%	66%	50%	36%
Fair	18%	25%	31%	27%	20%	29%	28%
Good	3%	29%	39%	9%	6%	16%	24%
Excellent	2%	16%	11%	3%	3%	4%	8%
No Opinion	4%	5%	4%	4%	6%	2%	4%
e. The convenience of public transportation							
Poor	76%	29%	20%	61%	74%	54%	42%
Fair	13%	22%	30%	25%	13%	27%	25%
Good	3%	29%	36%	9%	7%	13%	22%
Excellent	2%	14%	8%	1%	1%	2%	5%
No Opinion	6%	5%	6%	4%	6%	3%	5%
f. Efforts to reduce poverty in your community							
Poor	42%	20%	29%	37%	36%	30%	31%
Fair	34%	29%	39%	38%	31%	46%	38%
Good	12%	27%	23%	14%	14%	17%	19%
Excellent	1%	13%	2%	3%	1%	0%	3%
No Opinion	10%	11%	7%	8%	18%	8%	9%

Exhibit 6.10 Community Supports for Economic Stability (cont.)

Topic/Survey	BU	HO*	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
g. Efforts to reduce hunger in your community							
Poor	8%	0%	10%	14%	15%	14%	11%
Fair	46%	29%	31%	41%	37%	38%	35%
Good	33%	49%	43%	32%	29%	37%	39%
Excellent	6%	19%	13%	9%	8%	7%	11%
No Opinion	8%	2%	3%	4%	11%	4%	4%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.

Exhibit 6.11 provides further insight into community support needs through 2-1-1 call data. For each county and the region in calendar 2022, the exhibit shows 2-1-1 call types, the common caller problems or needs, and common referral types. (Note that the exhibit only shows the 5 most common problems/needs and referral types for each county and the region. Dozens of additional concerns were also presented by callers.)

- The most common problems or needs presented by calls were related to mental health/addictions housing, information services, health care, and legal, consumer, and public safety services.
- The most common referral types across the region included referrals for talk lines / warm lines, individual counseling, housing-related assistance, directory assistance and electric service payment assistance.

Exhibit 6.11 2-1-1 Assistance Profile

County/Region	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Contacts (2022)	84	990	6706	994	303	261	9,338
Call Types							
Information and Referral	52	912	4,756	808	210	197	6,935
Information Only	23	42	1,273	47	65	22	1,472
No Referral Given	2	9	470	47	11	15	554
Crisis	8	40	483	137	20	32	720
Problems/Needs (top 5 for each)							
Mental Health / Addictions	51	893	5,669	1,106	290	271	8,280
Housing	36	154	1,373	453	129	98	2,243
Information Services	14	34	746		47	30	936
Health Care	16		646	110	57	31	882
Legal, Consumer, and Public Safety Services			493	76			692
Food / Meals	17	42					
Transportation							
Utility Assistance				113	53	54	
Individual, Family, and Community Support		25				30	
Referral Types (top 5 for each)							
Talk lines / Warmlines		705	2,358	270	23	31	3,390
Individual Counseling	6	72	1,309	276	63	62	1,788
Rent Payment Assistance	8	62	335	116	32		570
Directory Assistance	10		483				537
Electric Service Payment Assistance			282	70	34	36	440
Food Pantries	8	25					
Low Income/Subsidized Private Rental Housing	7	31			27		
Homeless Motel Vouchers				81		27	
Community Shelters							
General Counseling Services						19	

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.

7. Physical Environment and Safety

Physical environment and community safety affect length and quality of life. The physical environment includes the spaces where individuals live, learn, work, and play. People interact with their physical environment through the air they breathe, water they drink, houses they live in, and the transportation they access to travel to work and school. This section describes selected community indicators and community insights about the physical environment and safety in the region.

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Community Indicators

Exhibit 7.1 shows the County Health Rankings for the physical environment. The ranking are based on a set of indicators including air pollution, drinking water violations, housing problems, driving alone to work, and commute time.
- Monroe County ranks in the 1st quartile for Wisconsin, and La Crosse County ranks in the 2nd quartile.
- Buffalo County, Houston County, Trempealeau County, and Vernon County rank in the 4th quartile.
- Available trend data show air pollution is improving across the region.

Exhibit 7.1 County Health Rankings for the Physical Environment

	BU	HO*	LC	MO	TR	VE	MN*	WI
Rankings								
Physical Environment Rank	61	69	22	16	55	66	--	--

Ranking Key: ■ 1st (best) quartile ■ 2nd quartile ■ 3rd quartile ■ 4th quartile

	BU	HO*	LC	MO	TR	VE	MN*	WI
Indicators								
Air pollution-particulate matter (2019)	7.9	8.1	7.6	8.0	8.0	8.1	6.1	7.8
Drinking water violations (2021)	Yes	No	No	No	Yes	Yes	N/A	N/A
Severe housing problems (2015-2019)	12%	9%	13%	11%	10%	15%	13%	13%
Driving alone to work (2017-2021)	78%	80%	79%	78%	79%	77%	74%	78%
Long commute- driving alone (2017-2021)	39%	31%	18%	24%	34%	40%	31%	28%
Selected Trends								
Air pollution – particulate matter	B	B	B	B	B	B	--	--

Trend Key: B Getting better -- No trend W Getting worse

Source: University of Wisconsin-Madison Population Health Institute. County Health Rankings. Retrieved in July 2023 from https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/.
:*Note: Houston County is ranked among all Minnesota counties. Other counties are ranked among all Wisconsin counties.

Community Insights

Exhibit 7.2 summarizes community survey responses about community safety. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. At the regional level, 21% rated overall community safety as poor or fair.

Exhibit 7.2 Rating of Overall Community Safety

County/Region	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Survey Responses	92	87	531	225	89	203	1,227
Rating of overall community safety							
Poor	1%	0%	3%	1%	3%	0%	2%
Fair	10%	10%	24%	24%	19%	11%	19%
Good	75%	61%	58%	64%	69%	67%	63%
Excellent	14%	29%	15%	11%	9%	22%	16%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.

Exhibit 7.3 summarizes community survey results regarding specific concerns about community safety. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. The percent saying they were very or moderately concerned about each topic at the regional level included:

a. 59% school safety
b. 59% cyber security
c. 64% criminal activity
d. 27% community response to flooding
e. 33% community response to disease outbreak
f. 29% community response to hazardous materials incidents
g. 17% community response to terrorist activity
h. 45% community response to tap water safety
i. 42% community response to well water safety

Exhibit 7.3 Concerns about Community Safety

County/Region	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Survey Responses	92	87	535	225	88	206	1,233
a. School safety							
Very Concerned	18%	31%	30%	23%	27%	27%	27%
Moderately Concerned	30%	33%	31%	38%	26%	31%	32%
A Little Concerned	32%	20%	27%	24%	32%	26%	26%
Not Concerned	18%	14%	10%	14%	14%	14%	12%
No Opinion	1%	2%	2%	1%	1%	2%	2%
b. Cyber security (e.g., identity theft)							
Very Concerned	32%	32%	27%	22%	26%	31%	27%
Moderately Concerned	25%	34%	32%	35%	33%	33%	32%
A Little Concerned	26%	25%	27%	28%	33%	26%	27%
Not Concerned	16%	8%	11%	12%	5%	9%	11%
No Opinion	0%	0%	3%	3%	3%	1%	2%
c. Criminal activity							
Very Concerned	22%	31%	37%	27%	28%	23%	31%
Moderately Concerned	38%	19%	36%	35%	27%	32%	33%
A Little Concerned	24%	35%	20%	27%	33%	33%	26%
Not Concerned	15%	14%	5%	10%	13%	10%	9%
No Opinion	1%	1%	1%	1%	0%	1%	1%
d. Community response to flood							
Very Concerned	4%	16%	8%	8%	9%	12%	9%
Moderately Concerned	12%	22%	17%	17%	25%	18%	18%
A Little Concerned	28%	16%	32%	24%	31%	29%	28%
Not Concerned	55%	45%	37%	40%	32%	38%	39%
No Opinion	0%	1%	7%	11%	2%	3%	6%
e. Disease outbreak							
Very Concerned	4%	20%	10%	10%	9%	13%	11%
Moderately Concerned	15%	18%	24%	21%	29%	20%	22%
A Little Concerned	37%	30%	36%	32%	24%	36%	34%
Not Concerned	43%	32%	29%	33%	37%	30%	31%
No Opinion	0%	0%	2%	4%	1%	1%	2%
f. Hazardous materials incident							
Very Concerned	7%	14%	9%	7%	11%	7%	9%
Moderately Concerned	18%	23%	20%	21%	21%	17%	20%
A Little Concerned	27%	24%	35%	31%	32%	41%	33%
Not Concerned	48%	36%	33%	35%	34%	33%	35%
No Opinion	0%	3%	4%	6%	1%	1%	3%

Exhibit 7.3 Concerns about Community Safety (cont.)

County/Region	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Survey Responses	92	87	535	225	88	206	1,233
g. Terrorist activity							
Very Concerned	4%	16%	5%	6%	5%	6%	6%
Moderately Concerned	8%	15%	11%	12%	19%	11%	11%
A Little Concerned	25%	25%	30%	26%	24%	29%	28%
Not Concerned	62%	43%	51%	52%	52%	52%	51%
No Opinion	1%	1%	3%	4%	0%	2%	3%
h. Tap water safety							
Very Concerned	11%	23%	30%	21%	15%	19%	23%
Moderately Concerned	18%	18%	21%	27%	27%	23%	22%
A Little Concerned	27%	23%	26%	25%	26%	24%	25%
Not Concerned	39%	33%	22%	25%	32%	33%	27%
No Opinion	4%	2%	2%	2%	0%	1%	2%
i. Well water safety							
Very Concerned	14%	24%	25%	18%	15%	22%	21%
Moderately Concerned	23%	20%	20%	24%	28%	21%	21%
A Little Concerned	21%	21%	21%	21%	16%	25%	21%
Not Concerned	36%	32%	24%	27%	33%	28%	27%
No Opinion	6%	3%	10%	11%	8%	3%	8%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.

Exhibit 7.4 summarizes community survey results regarding responsiveness of public safety agencies. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. Percent saying they were very or moderately concerned about each topic at the regional level:

    a.   32% responsiveness of emergency medical services
    b.   36% responsiveness of law enforcement
    c.   26% responsiveness of the fire department

Exhibit 7.4 Responsiveness of Public Safety Agencies

County/Region	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Survey Responses	92	87	535	225	88	206	1,233
a. Responsiveness of emergency medical services (EMS)							
Very Concerned	22%	15%	9%	12%	19%	18%	13%
Moderately Concerned	32%	28%	13%	17%	28%	23%	19%
A Little Concerned	21%	23%	21%	22%	23%	26%	22%
Not Concerned	26%	34%	50%	44%	28%	31%	42%
No Opinion	0%	0%	7%	4%	1%	1%	4%
b. Responsiveness of law enforcement							
Very Concerned	13%	17%	13%	13%	16%	14%	14%
Moderately Concerned	21%	23%	21%	22%	28%	20%	22%
A Little Concerned	30%	30%	28%	27%	28%	28%	28%
Not Concerned	36%	30%	34%	34%	27%	35%	33%
No Opinion	0%	0%	5%	4%	1%	2%	3%
c. Responsiveness of fire department							
Very Concerned	9%	13%	7%	12%	11%	12%	10%
Moderately Concerned	21%	21%	12%	17%	25%	19%	16%
A Little Concerned	21%	25%	24%	22%	23%	26%	24%
Not Concerned	50%	41%	52%	46%	39%	41%	47%
No Opinion	0%	0%	5%	3%	2%	2%	3%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.

> “ Most of our services to protect the community are ran on a voluntary basis. The lack of people wanting to work and or volunteer is a cause for concern.
>
> ~ Buffalo County Survey Respondent ”

Exhibit 7.5 summarizes community survey results regarding preparedness for emergency events. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. Summary ratings at the regional level include:
- 53% said they were not or a little prepared for household fire
- 65% said they were not or a little prepared for flood
- 54% said they were not or a little prepared for a power outage longer than 24 hours
- 53% said they were not or a little prepared for a natural disaster
- 45% said they were not or a little prepared for a pandemic
- 59% said they were not or a little prepared for loss of a job

Exhibit 7.5 Preparedness for Emergency Events

County/Region	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Survey Responses	91	86	531	223	86	205	1,222
a. Household fire							
Not prepared	13%	13%	20%	16%	15%	11%	17%
A Little Prepared	44%	37%	33%	41%	36%	35%	36%
Moderately Prepared	35%	37%	37%	31%	34%	43%	36%
Very Prepared	8%	13%	10%	12%	15%	11%	11%
b. Flood							
Not prepared	26%	27%	40%	39%	25%	25%	34%
A Little Prepared	36%	27%	31%	30%	39%	27%	31%
Moderately Prepared	26%	32%	20%	24%	24%	29%	24%
Very Prepared	13%	14%	9%	7%	13%	18%	11%
c. Power outage longer than 24 Hours							
Not prepared	11%	13%	22%	21%	17%	18%	19%
A Little Prepared	34%	35%	39%	33%	30%	29%	35%
Moderately Prepared	39%	35%	29%	32%	36%	37%	32%
Very Prepared	16%	17%	11%	14%	16%	16%	13%
d. Natural disaster (such as ice storm, tornado, snowstorm)							
Not prepared	9%	10%	23%	19%	16%	12%	18%
A Little Prepared	37%	36%	36%	33%	38%	35%	35%
Moderately Prepared	44%	43%	33%	38%	35%	44%	37%
Very Prepared	10%	10%	9%	10%	10%	8%	9%
e. Pandemic/epidemic							
Not prepared	10%	11%	16%	16%	14%	14%	14%
A Little Prepared	30%	26%	31%	37%	33%	28%	31%
Moderately Prepared	46%	48%	36%	33%	35%	42%	38%
Very Prepared	14%	15%	17%	14%	18%	16%	16%
f. Loss of job							
Not prepared	33%	23%	31%	35%	39%	26%	31%
A Little Prepared	28%	30%	28%	27%	26%	31%	28%
Moderately Prepared	28%	38%	22%	24%	26%	23%	24%
Very Prepared	11%	8%	18%	14%	9%	20%	16%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.

Exhibit 7.6 summarizes community survey results regarding concerns about public spaces. Ratings are shown for each of the six counties and at the regional level. The percent saying they were very or moderately concerned about each topic at the regional level included:

   a. 22% loose animals
   b. 37% sidewalks in poor condition
   c. 33% lack of sidewalks
   d. 34% inadequate crosswalks
   e. 36% motor vehicle traffic
   f. 22% not enough traffic lights / stop signs
   g. 30% street lighting

Exhibit 7.6 Concerns about Public Spaces

County/Region	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
Total Survey Responses	92	87	535	225	88	206	1,233
a. Loose animals							
Very Concerned	7%	17%	8%	6%	10%	12%	9%
Moderately Concerned	11%	24%	11%	12%	13%	18%	13%
A Little Concerned	23%	16%	30%	34%	27%	33%	29%
Not Concerned	59%	42%	50%	46%	49%	36%	47%
No Opinion	1%	0%	1%	3%	1%	1%	1%
b. Sidewalks in poor condition							
Very Concerned	9%	25%	16%	9%	10%	15%	14%
Moderately Concerned	27%	16%	22%	24%	23%	26%	23%
A Little Concerned	22%	21%	32%	29%	30%	32%	30%
Not Concerned	41%	36%	28%	33%	31%	24%	30%
No Opinion	1%	2%	1%	4%	6%	2%	2%
c. Lack of sidewalks							
Very Concerned	9%	24%	12%	11%	15%	15%	13%
Moderately Concerned	22%	18%	20%	19%	17%	20%	20%
A Little Concerned	19%	23%	27%	28%	30%	24%	26%
Not Concerned	46%	33%	39%	37%	36%	38%	38%
No Opinion	4%	1%	2%	4%	2%	3%	3%
d. Inadequate crosswalks							
Very Concerned	8%	20%	15%	10%	16%	15%	14%
Moderately Concerned	13%	17%	21%	18%	23%	23%	20%
A Little Concerned	20%	29%	26%	23%	20%	28%	25%
Not Concerned	57%	33%	36%	43%	39%	32%	38%
No Opinion	2%	1%	2%	5%	2%	2%	3%
e. Motor vehicle traffic							
Very Concerned	3%	12%	18%	9%	10%	19%	14%
Moderately Concerned	12%	26%	24%	15%	28%	26%	22%
A Little Concerned	40%	27%	32%	39%	26%	27%	32%
Not Concerned	45%	36%	25%	35%	35%	27%	30%
No Opinion	0%	0%	1%	3%	0%	0%	1%

Exhibit 7.6 Concerns about Public Spaces (cont.)

County/Region	BU	HO	LC	MO	TR	VE	REGION
f. Not enough traffic lights/stop signs							
Very Concerned	3%	14%	9%	5%	10%	16%	9%
Moderately Concerned	7%	24%	13%	9%	10%	17%	13%
A Little Concerned	18%	10%	26%	26%	23%	28%	24%
Not Concerned	70%	50%	51%	56%	51%	37%	50%
No Opinion	2%	1%	2%	4%	6%	2%	3%
g. Street lighting							
Very Concerned	5%	14%	14%	10%	7%	13%	12%
Moderately Concerned	15%	22%	20%	12%	19%	15%	18%
A Little Concerned	21%	20%	27%	31%	22%	25%	26%
Not Concerned	57%	43%	37%	44%	45%	43%	41%
No Opinion	2%	1%	1%	3%	7%	4%	3%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.

> " I walk frequently and our community is not pedestrian friendly. You take your life into your own hands when crossing the street.
>
> ~ Vernon County Survey Respondent "

8. Additional Community Insights

Beyond the results presented in Sections 1-7, the study gathered additional community insights from community members in their own words. These insights were collected through two channels, the community survey, and a series of community insight events. This section presents a summary of those results, prefaced with a brief description of thematic analysis methods used to summarize the results.

Thematic Analysis

Through the community survey and the community insight events, respondents were invited to respond to particular questions in their own words rather than through a pre-defined checklist. To summarize the results, Community Health Solutions applied a method called 'thematic analysis' to identify common themes among the responses. Thematic analysis is a process for grouping text responses into categories based on common words and phrases. It is a commonly used method in qualitative analysis. The results of this summary analysis are presented in the exhibits that follow.

In reviewing the results of the thematic analysis, it is important to note that this approach is designed to identify broad themes as a starting point for further analysis. The detailed responses collected through the survey and the community insight events provide a much richer database for understanding community member perspectives in their own words. All of the detailed responses have been shared with the project partners.

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Themes from the Community Survey

At the end of the community survey instrument, respondents were invited to provide any additional comments in their own words. As shown in **Exhibit 8.1**, a total of 169 comments were received.

- As shown in Part A of the exhibit, the most common themes identifying service needs included social supports, health care services and coverage, education, housing, and health equity.
- As shown in Part B, themes identifying particular populations in need included children and families, low-income population, older adults, people with disabilities, minority population / people of color, rural populations, LGBTQ+ populations, and immigrants/undocumented.

Exhibit 8.1 Thematic Analysis: Additional Comments from Survey Respondents

Please provide any additional comments regarding this survey here:

Themes identified from 169 survey responses:	Number of responses involving this theme	%
A. Themes Identifying Service Needs		
Social Supports	51	30%
Health Care Services and Coverage	44	26%
Education	31	18%
Housing	30	18%
Health Equity	26	15%
Mental Health	19	11%
Employment	13	8%
Transportation	13	8%
Community Collaboration	12	7%
Health Environment (Built or Natural)	12	7%
Food Security	9	5%
Community Safety	8	5%
Substance Use Concerns	8	5%
COVID-19	7	4%
Diversity and Inclusion	7	4%
Taxes	6	4%
Health Behaviors	5	3%
Telehealth	4	2%
Faith-Based Communities	3	2%
Funding-Related	3	2%
Chronic Conditions	2	1%
Volunteering	2	1%
Health Communication	1	1%
Social Isolation	1	1%
Other (not-issue specified)	23	14%
B. Particular Populations Mentioned		
Children and Families	45	27%
Low Income Population	20	12%
Older Adults	17	10%
People with Disabilities	9	5%
Minority Population / People of Color	4	2%
Rural Populations	4	2%
LGBTQ+	4	2%
Immigrants/Undocumented	1	1%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of community survey data.

Themes from Community Insight Events

In addition to the survey of community residents, the study also included a series of community listening events facilitated by personnel from the project partner organizations. The events were held either onsite at community locations or virtually via Zoom. **Exhibit 8.2** lists the event dates and locations.

Exhibit 8.2 List of Community Insight Events

Location	Group	Date
1. Arcadia High School, Trempealeau County	Hispanic Focus Group	9/21/2023
2. Assembly Room in Sparta	Health and Human Services Board	7/5/2023
3. Cia Siab, Inc. La Crosse County	Hmong Maternal & Child Health Group	9/13/2023
4. Cia Siab, Inc. La Crosse County	Cia Siab, Inc. Staff Members	9/11/2023
5. Hillsboro, Vernon County	St. Joseph's Community Insight Forum	9/26/2023
6. Independence Library, Trempealeau County	Hispanic Focus Group	9/28/2023
7. La Crosse, WI	La Crosse PRIDE Event Attendees	9/9/2023
8. La Crosse, WI	Gundersen Health System Employees & Volunteers	9/26/2023
9. Mayo Clinic Health System- La Crosse, La Crosse County	Social work team	9/8/2023
10. Mayo Clinic Health System-La Crosse, La Crosse County	Social work team	9/11/2023
11. Multiple Counties	Nonprofit Directors	7/25/2023
12. Multiple Counties	Community Health Workers	7/19/2023
13. Sparta, Monroe County	Monroe County Health and Human Services Board	8/2/2023
14. Sparta, WI, Monroe County	Needle Exchange staff	6/21/2023
15. Sparta, WI, Monroe County	Monroe County Health Department Maternal and Child Programming	7/10/2023
16. Virtual Attendees from La Crosse and Monroe Counties	Head Start Staff Members	9/26/2023
17. Wilton, WI, Monroe County	Together With Veterans Monthly Breakfast	9/25/2023
18. Zoom, representatives from La Crosse, Monroe, and Vernon counties	Coulee Collaborative to End Homelessness	8/15/2023
19. Zoom-Monroe County 54660	Monroe County Nutrition Coalition	8/8/2023

Source: Great Rivers United Way

An Important Note on Methods

Exhibits 8.3-8.7 present the thematic analysis of insights captured at the events. During the events, participants were invited to share multiple insights in response to each question. Consequently, a participant's response to a given question might include several different insights, or 'statements.' With this dynamic in mind, the unit of analysis in the following exhibits is the number of statements classified into each theme, rather than the number of individuals.

Important Health Issues. Participants in community insight events were asked: What do you see as the most important health issues or concerns facing your community? **Exhibit 8.3** lists the results.

- As shown in Part A of the exhibit, the most common themes identifying services needs included health care services and coverage, mental health, social services/supports, substance use concerns, and health behaviors.
- As shown in Part B, particular populations mentioned included children and families, low-income population, people with chronic conditions, older adults, rural populations, LGBTQ+ populations, minority population / people of color, immigrants/undocumented, and people with disabilities.

Exhibit 8.3 Community Insight Events: Important Health Issues

What do you see as the most important health issues or concerns facing your community?		
Themes identified from 334 statements collected at events:	Number of statements involving this theme	%
A. Themes Identifying Service Needs		
Health Care Services and Coverage	145	43%
Mental Health	81	24%
Social Services/Supports	62	19%
Substance Use Concerns	47	14%
Health Behaviors	43	13%
Housing	42	13%
Food Security	20	6%
Chronic Conditions	15	4%
Transportation	14	4%
Education	13	4%
Health Equity	10	3%
Social Isolation	8	2%
Communicable Disease	7	2%
Community Safety	7	2%
Health Environment (Built or Natural)	7	2%
COVID-19	6	2%
Diversity and Inclusion	6	2%
Health Communication	4	1%
Community Collaboration	3	1%
Domestic Violence	3	1%
Employment	3	1%
Staffing	3	1%
Funding-Related	2	1%
Telehealth	1	0%
B. Particular Populations Mentioned		
Children and Families	17	5%
Low Income Population	15	4%
Older Adults	14	4%
Rural Populations	6	2%
LGBTQ+	5	1%
Minority Populations / People of Color	4	1%
Immigrants/Undocumented	2	1%
People with Disabilities	1	0%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of themes emerging from participant statements captured at community insight events.

New or Emerging Health Issues. Participants in community insight events were asked: Are you aware of any new or emerging health issues or concerns that people should know about? **Exhibit 8.4** lists the results.

- As shown in Part A of the exhibit, the most common themes identifying service needs included health care services and coverage, social services/supports, COVID-19, mental health, and substance use concerns.
- As shown in Part B, particular population mentioned included children and families, older adults, low-income population, immigrants/undocumented, LGBTQ+, women, minority populations / people of color, and rural populations.

Exhibit 8.4 Community Insight Events: New or Emerging Health Issues

Are you aware of any new or emerging health issues or concerns that people should know about?

Themes identified from 243 statements collected at events:	Number of statements involving this theme	%
A. Themes Identifying Service Needs		
Health Care Services and Coverage	60	25%
Social Services/Supports	36	15%
COVID-19	34	14%
Mental Health	30	12%
Substance Use Concerns	23	9%
Housing	16	7%
Food Security	13	5%
Communicable Disease	12	5%
Education	12	5%
Chronic Conditions	11	5%
Health Behaviors	11	5%
Staffing	10	4%
Community Safety	9	4%
Health Communication	8	3%
Social Isolation	7	3%
Community Collaboration	5	2%
Health Environment (Built or Natural)	5	2%
Diversity and Inclusion	4	2%
Health Equity	4	2%
Employment	3	1%
Transportation	3	1%
Volunteering	2	1%
Domestic Violence	1	0%
Telehealth	1	0%
Other (not-issue specified)	5	2%
B. Particular Populations Mentioned		
Children and Families	28	12%
Older Adults	16	7%
Low Income Population	9	4%
Immigrants/Undocumented	4	2%
LGBTQ+	4	2%
Women	3	1%
Minority Population/POC	1	0%
Rural Populations	1	0%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of themes emerging from participant statements captured at community insight events.

Vulnerable Populations. Participants in community insight events were asked: Are there any particular population groups who may be especially vulnerable for problems with their health or health care? **Exhibit 8.5** lists the results.

- As shown in Part A of the exhibit, the most common themes identifying service needs included health equity, health care services and coverage, housing, diversity, and inclusion, social services/supports, and mental health.
- As shown in Part B, particular populations mentioned included low-income population, older adults, children and families, minority population / people of color, LGBTQ+, immigrants / undocumented, women, people with disabilities, and rural populations.

Exhibit 8.5 Community Insight Events: Vulnerable Populations

Are there any particular population groups who may be especially vulnerable for problems with their health or health care?

Themes identified from 286 statements collected at events:	Number of statements involving this theme	%
A. Themes Identifying Service Needs		
Health Equity	79	28%
Health Care Services and Coverage	40	14%
Housing	39	14%
Diversity and Inclusion	24	8%
Social Services/Supports	13	5%
Mental Health	13	5%
Substance Use Concerns	8	3%
Transportation	8	3%
Domestic Violence	6	2%
Community Safety	4	1%
Health Behaviors	4	1%
Health Environment (Built or Natural)	4	1%
Social Isolation	4	1%
Chronic Conditions	3	1%
Education	3	1%
COVID-19	2	1%
Other (not-issue specified)	8	3%
B. Particular Populations Mentioned		
Low Income Population	67	23%
Older Adults	47	16%
Children and Families	47	16%
Minority Populations / People of Color	31	11%
LGBTQ+	23	8%
Immigrants/Undocumented	10	3%
Women	7	2%
People with Disabilities	5	2%
Rural Populations	4	1%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of themes emerging from participant statements captured at community insight events.

Important Health Resources. Participants in community insight events were asked: What do you see as the most important health resources available to support people in your community? **Exhibit 8.6** lists the results.
  - As shown in Part A of the exhibit, the most common themes identifying community resources included health care services and coverage, social services/supports, education, food security, and mental health.
  - As shown in Part B, particular populations mentioned included children and families, women, older adults, low-income population, people with disabilities, immigrants/undocumented, LGBTQ+, minority populations / people of color, and rural populations.

Exhibit 8.6 Community Insight Events: Important Health Resources

What do you see as the most important health resources available to support people in your community?		
Themes identified from 274 statements collected at events:	Number of statements involving this theme	%
A. Themes Identifying Community Resources		
Health Care Services and Coverage	135	49%
Social Services/Supports	91	33%
Education	15	5%
Food Security	14	5%
Mental Health	12	4%
Health Behaviors	10	4%
Housing	9	3%
Community Collaboration	8	3%
Health Environment (Built or Natural)	8	3%
Transportation	7	3%
Employment	6	2%
Health Communication	6	2%
Communicable Disease	5	2%
Community Safety	4	1%
Diversity and Inclusion	4	1%
Substance Use Concerns	4	1%
Chronic Conditions	2	1%
Funding-Related	2	1%
Health Equity	2	1%
Volunteering	1	0%
Other (not-issue specified)	3	1%
B. Particular Populations Mentioned		
Children and Families	20	7%
Women	6	2%
Older Adults	5	2%
Low Income Population	4	1%
People with Disabilities	3	1%
Immigrants/Undocumented	1	0%
LGBTQ+	1	0%
Minority Populations / People of Color	1	0%
Rural Populations	1	0%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of themes emerging from participant statements captured at community insight events.

Ideas for Working Together. Participants in community insight events were asked: Do you have any ideas about how people or organizations could work together to promote better health or health care for the community? **Exhibit 8.7** lists the results.

- As shown in Part A of the exhibit, the most common themes identifying ideas for working together included community collaboration generally, health care services and coverage, social services/supports, health communication, and education.
- As shown in Part B, particular populations mentioned included children and families, older adults, low-income population, minority populations / people of color, rural populations, people with disabilities, LGBTQ+, and women.

Exhibit 8.7 Community Insight Events: Ideas for Working Together

Do you have any ideas about how people or organizations could work together to promote better health or health care for the community?

Themes identified from 205 statements collected at events:	Number of statements involving this theme	%
A. Themes Identifying Ideas for Working Together		
Community Collaboration (generally)	61	30%
Health Care Services and Coverage	54	26%
Social Services/Supports	44	21%
Health Communication	35	17%
Education	28	14%
Mental Health	10	5%
Food Security	7	3%
Health Behaviors	6	3%
Health Equity	6	3%
Volunteering	6	3%
Funding-Related	5	2%
Housing	5	2%
Transportation	5	2%
Health Environment (Built or Natural)	4	2%
Community Safety	3	1%
Social Isolation	3	1%
Telehealth	3	1%
Diversity and Inclusion	2	1%
Employment	2	1%
Staffing	2	1%
Communicable Disease	1	0%
COVID-19	1	0%
Substance Use Concerns	1	0%
Other (not-issue specified)	6	3%
B. Particular Populations Mentioned		
Children and Families	21	10%
Older Adults	6	3%
Low Income Population	3	1%
Minority Population/POC	2	1%
Rural Populations	2	1%
People with Disabilities	2	1%
LGBTQ+	1	0%
Women	1	0%

Source: Community Health Solutions analysis of themes emerging from participant statements captured at community insight events.

9. Prioritization & Reflection

Community Insight
on Priority Needs

All information presented thus far has been collected data and community input. As a culmination of the Compass process, community stakeholder meetings were held in each county to review the data, discuss community issues, prioritize community issues, and identify community assets.

Great Rivers United Way

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The invited participants included representatives from local businesses, education, faith, government, health and human services, nonprofit organizations, and the general public. A total of 177 individuals participated in the various county meetings. The meetings in each county were planned and facilitated by the public health departments and local hospitals in coordination with Great Rivers United Way. Each county decided on the number and types of meetings that would best meet the needs of their community. Meetings are listed in **Exhibit 9.1**

Exhibit 9.1 Community Stakeholder Meetings

County	Location	Date
Buffalo	Roger Marten Community Center, Mondovi, WI	3/7/2024
Buffalo	Cochrane Fountain City School Auditorium, Fountain City, WI	3/19/2024
Buffalo	Virtual	3/22/2024
Houston	ABLE, Inc, Caledonia, MN	3/26/2024
La Crosse	The Nature Place, La Crosse, WI	3/13/2024
La Crosse	Virtual	3/19/2024
La Crosse	Hazel Brown Leicht Memorial Library, West Salem, WI	3/21/2024
Monroe	Sparrow's Nest at the Abbey, Sparta, WI	3/12/2024
Monroe	Virtual	3/13/2024
Monroe	Sparrow's Nest at the Abbey, Sparta, WI	3/18/2024
Trempealeau	Gundersen Tri-County Hospital, Whitehall, WI	4/4/2024
Vernon	McIntosh Memorial Library, Viroqua, WI	4/18/2024
Vernon	Gundersen St. Joseph's Hospital, Hillsboro, WI	4/23/2024

Source: Great Rivers United Way

Stakeholder meeting participants were presented with data from their county and given opportunities to give input on the top needs of the county. Presentations can be found online at www.compassnow.org.

Each county developed their own process for prioritization of community needs. The top needs are shown in **Exhibit 9.2.** Differences in prioritization methods from county to county led to some identified needs being broad with other identified needs being more specific and could fit under the more broad category. **Exhibit 9.2** shows the needs organized into broad categories with more specific needs listed as a sub-category. In determining the top needs for the region, all needs within a broad category were calculated into an average.

Exhibit 9.2 provides a regional summary of the top five priority issues identified by community stakeholders from the six counties. The first column is the list of broad categories and sub-categories of needs identified in the counties covered by the report. Under each county is the priority rank given to that issue by the stakeholders. Shading means that need did not rank in the top five.

Exhibit 9.2 Top Five Priority Needs Identified by Community Stakeholders

County	BU	HO*	LC	MO	TR	VE
Areas of Need Identified in the Community Stakeholder Meeting	**Priority Ranking Based on Community Stakeholder Input**					
Mental Health	2	1	1	4	1	1
Healthcare Access	5		3	2	3	3
Dental		4			5	
Social & Economic Issues						2
Poverty				5		
Housing			2			
Childcare Access	3					
Nutrition: Food Access			5	3	2*	
Nutrition & Physical Activity						4
Healthy Eating		2			2*	
Active Living		3				
Substance Use			4	1	4	
Youth Dating/Sexual Violence	1					
Lyme Disease	4					
Environmental		5				
Aging & Disability						5

*Trempealeau County Stakeholders identified nutrition/healthy eating along with food access as a priority. Shaded items were not ranked in the top five needs for this county. However, they may be included in a lower ranking. Please refer to the county level summary and report for additional details. Source: The 177 participants in community stakeholder meetings invited to share insights on priority needs in their county. Insights were collected by meeting facilitators using differing methods. Please refer to the county-level summary and report for additional details.

Reflection on Top Needs

The following is a review of data relating to issues identified as a top priority in the region by averaging the rank of each issue. As we reflect on these top needs, we also recognize that the issues identified affect some groups more than others. While this report is intended as a broad overview of the status of the health of the region, it is just a starting point in exploring how best to respond to our health needs. Using a health equity lens is important in understanding how vulnerable groups such as those who are low-income, LGBT+, have a disability, or are a racial or ethnic minority are impacted differently and the root causes of those differences. Throughout this section we assessed some survey data points by income level, race, and population density (rural versus urban) to show differences in perception from group to group.

Mental Health

All counties involved in Compass identified mental health as a top need. The three largest themes of mental health concerns that emerged from focus groups and stakeholder meetings are barriers to accessing mental health care, systems issues, and people struggling.

Section 4 of this report covers youth mental health data, survey respondents' rating of their mental health, and survey respondents' level of concern about mental health and mental health stigma. Section 5 of this report covers data on the availability of mental health providers and survey respondents' rating of their ability to access and pay for mental health care. Specific data points supporting this need follow as well as an analysis of differences and similarities in mental health survey responses by income, race, and population density (rural versus urban).

Youth report experiencing mental health issues. In the 2020-2021 Youth Risk Behavior Survey taken in high schools in Buffalo, La Crosse, Monroe, and Trempealeau counties youth were asked a series of questions regarding mental health. About half answered that they had experienced either anxiety, depression, self-harm, and/or suicidal ideation in the past year. Further analysis shows higher percentages of students who or low-income or identify as LGBT+ as experiencing mental health problems. For more information on the Youth Risk Behavior Survey, please visit Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction online at https://dpi. wi.gov/sspw/yrbs. **Exhibit 9.3** is the slide showing youth mental health data from the regional data presentation. Shown are both mental health concerns and protective factors.
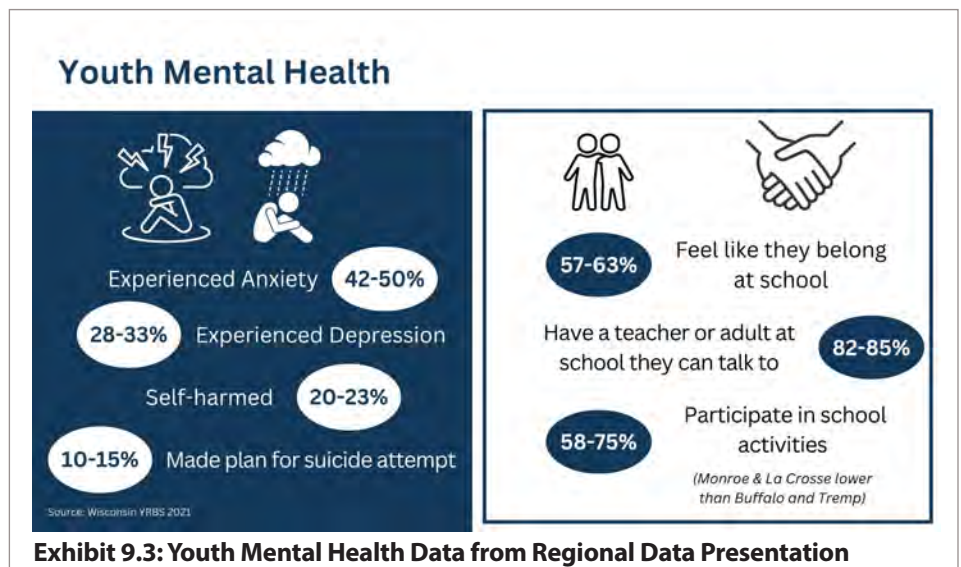

Exhibit 9.3: Youth Mental Health Data from Regional Data Presentation

Compass survey respondents increasingly have rated their overall mental health and access to mental health care as poor or fair. While the Compass survey is considered a snapshot in time and can't be used to make general conclusions about the whole population, it is a concern that an increasing proportion of respondents have rated their overall mental health as fair or poor and at the same time reported increasingly fair or poor access to care. **Exhibit 9.4** is Mental Health slide from the regional data presentation.
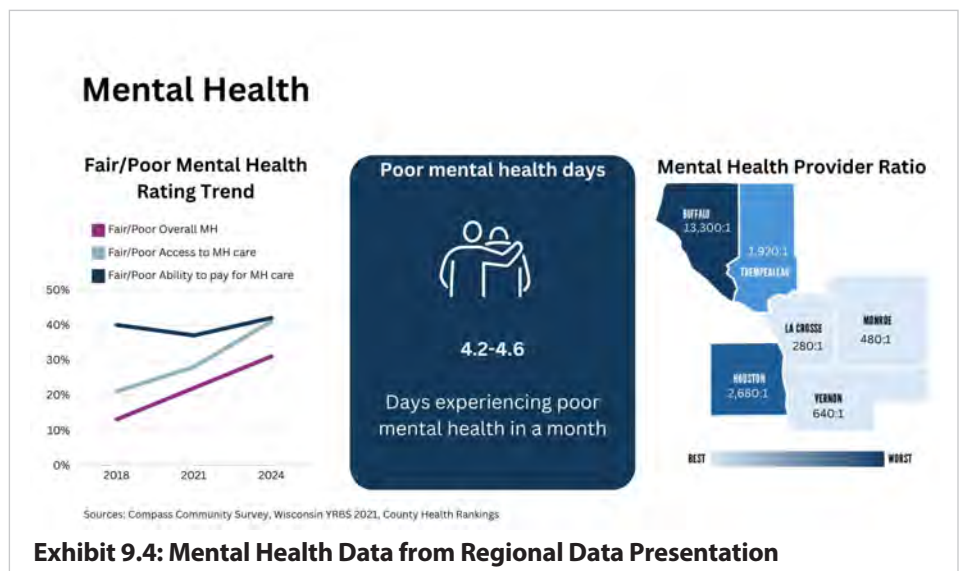

Exhibit 9.4: Mental Health Data from Regional Data Presentation

There were differences in survey responses based on race and income level. Black, Indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC) and low-income respondents were more likely to rate their overall mental health, access to mental health care, and ability to pay for mental health care as fair or poor. For our purposes, we use $35,000 and below as a proxy for low-income. An assessment of rural and urban responses did not show much difference in perception with the exception of the level of concern about mental health and suicide where urban respondents had higher levels of concern. No tests were conducted to determine if differences between groups are statistically significant. **Exhibit 9.5** shows responses based on income, race, and population density.

Exhibit 9.5
Mental Health Measures Overall and by Income Level, Race, and Population Density

	Overall	Under $35k	$35k & Over	BIPOC	White	Rural	Urban
Fair/Poor overall mental health	31%	45%	28%	46%	29%	30%	31%
Fair/Poor access to mental health care	41%	46%	39%	51%	39%	41%	40%
Fair/Poor ability to pay for mental health care	41%	56%	38%	60%	39%	41%	42%
Very/moderately concerned about mental health	83%	75%	86%	74%	84%	79%	88%
Very/moderately concerned about mental health stigma	71%	70%	75%	77%	73%	72%	75%
Very/moderately concerned about suicide	71%	69%	74%	75%	72%	67%	79%

Source: GRUW analysis of community survey data

Mental health was a concern in focus groups. Group members were asked, "What do you see as the most important health issues or concerns facing your community?" Out of the 334 statements, 89 or 27% were related to mental health. **Exhibit 9.6** shows the categories of focus groups and participants' specific mental health concerns.

Exhibit 9.6 Focus Group Responses About Mental Health

"What do you see as the most important health issues or concerns facing your community?"	Elders	Food/Nutrition Advocates	Hispanic	Hmoob	Local Government	Medical Providers	Mom & Child Group	Pride Event	Rural Community	Social Service Providers	Veterans
Mental Health (General)	X		X	X		X		X	X	X	X
Children's Mental Health				X					X	X	
Teen Mental Health				X					X	X	
Mental Health Treatment & Services						X			X	X	
Affordability of Mental Health Services										X	
Mental Illness									X		
Anxiety			X	X						X	
Depression			X	X			X			X	X
Suicide											X
Self-Harm						X	X				
Stress					X		X				
Isolation, Loneliness	X								X	X	X

An X means the topic was mentioned and recorded in a focus group. Shading means the topic was not recorded.
Source: GRUW analysis of focus group responses

Healthcare Access

Stakeholders in all counties identified healthcare access as a top need. Trempealeau County stakeholders prioritized both healthcare access and dental care access. Houston County stakeholders were specifically concerned about dental care access. Access to mental health treatment was also a concern and was categorized with overall mental health.

Section 5 of this report covers Health Care Access and Utilization data. Specific data points supporting this need follow as well as an analysis of disparities in healthcare access by income, race, and population density (rural versus urban).

Overall uninsured rates range from 5% in Houston County to 12% in Vernon County. **Exhibit 9.7** is from the regional data presentation and shows uninsured adult and child rates in each county of the region.

Uninsured Percentage

	Adults	Children
Buffalo	9%	7%
Houston	6%	3%
La Crosse	7%	3%
Monroe	10%	7%
Trempealeau	9%	7%
Vernon	11%	13%

Exhibit 9.7: Uninsured Adults and Children

Exhibit 9.8 is a slide from the regional data presentation and shows the ratios of population to every one provider throughout the region. While La Crosse County has a better patient to provider ratio than most counties in most categories, the higher patient to provider ratios mean people in Buffalo, Houston, Monroe, Trempealeau, and Vernon counties may have to travel to get needed care.
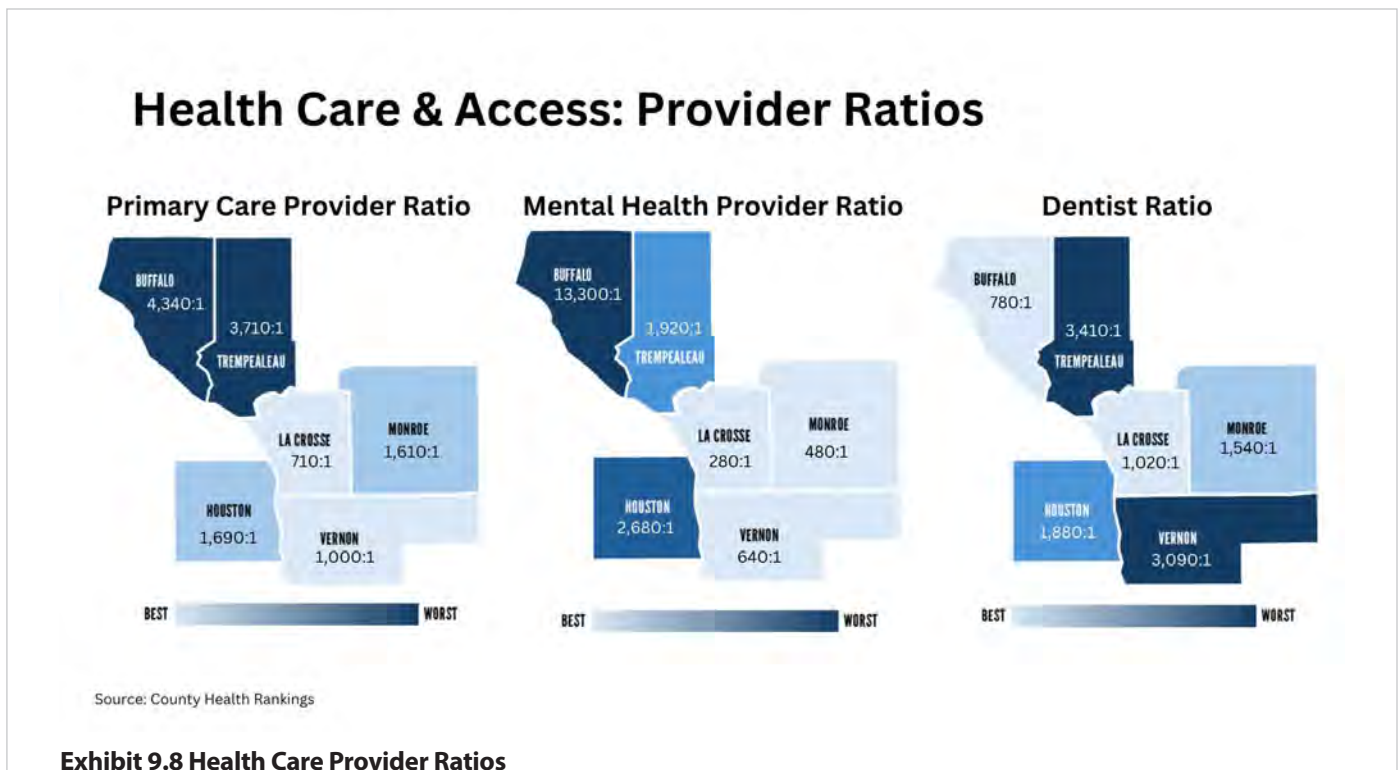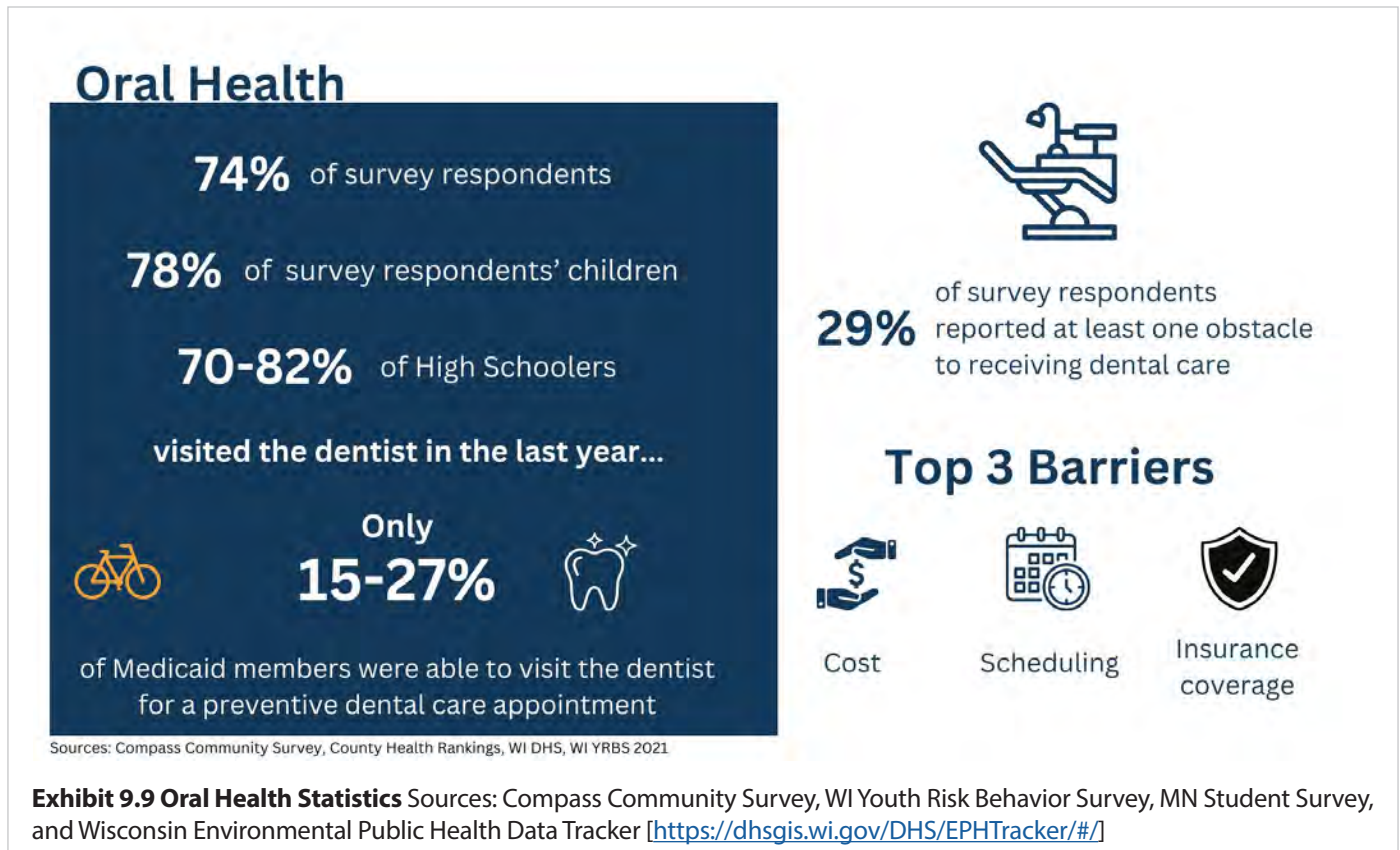

Health Care & Access: Provider Ratios

Primary Care Provider Ratio

BUFFALO 4,340:1
TREMPEALEAU 3,710:1
LA CROSSE 710:1
MONROE 1,610:1
HOUSTON 1,690:1
VERNON 1,000:1
BEST — WORST

Mental Health Provider Ratio

BUFFALO 13,300:1
TREMPEALEAU 1,920:1
LA CROSSE 280:1
MONROE 480:1
HOUSTON 2,680:1
VERNON 640:1
BEST — WORST

Dentist Ratio

BUFFALO 780:1
TREMPEALEAU 3,410:1
LA CROSSE 1,020:1
MONROE 1,540:1
HOUSTON 1,880:1
VERNON 3,090:1
BEST — WORST

Source: County Health Rankings

Exhibit 9.8 Health Care Provider Ratios

Exhibit 9.9 is the oral health slide from the regional data presentation. It shows the disparity in preventive dental care access for Medicaid members.

Exhibit 9.9 Oral Health Statistics Sources: Compass Community Survey, WI Youth Risk Behavior Survey, MN Student Survey, and Wisconsin Environmental Public Health Data Tracker [https://dhsgis.wi.gov/DHS/EPHTracker/#/]

There were differences in survey responses based on race and income level. Black, Indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC) and low-income respondents were more likely to rate access and ability to pay for care as fair or poor. For our purposes, we use $35,000 and below as a proxy for low-income. An assessment of rural and urban responses did not show much difference in perception. No tests were conducted to determine if differences between groups are statistically significant. **Exhibit 9.10** shows responses based on income, race, and population density.

Exhibit 9.10 Healthcare Access Measures Overall and by Income Level, Race, and Population Density

	Overall	Under $35k	$35k & Over	BIPOC	White	Rural	Urban
Fair/Poor Access to healthcare	15%	28%	13%	35%	13%	17%	13%
Fair/Poor Access to dental care	23%	45%	18%	48%	21%	24%	23%
Fair/Poor Ability to pay for healthcare	36%	51%	32%	56%	33%	37%	35%
Fair/Poor Ability to pay for dental care	35%	61%	29%	58%	33%	36%	35%
One or more household member uninsured	6%	11%	4%	15%	5%	7%	6%
Barrier to receiving healthcare when needed	40%	55%	35%	65%	37%	42%	37%
Barrier to receiving dental care when needed	29%	55%	24%	64%	27%	32%	29%

Source: GRUW analysis of community survey data

Healthcare access was a concern in focus groups. Group members were asked, "What do you see as the most important health issues or concerns facing your community?" Out of the 334 statements, 184 or 55% were related to healthcare services and coverage. **Exhibit 9.11** shows the categories of focus groups and participants' specific healthcare access concerns.

Exhibit 9.11 Focus Group Responses About Healthcare Access

"What do you see as the most important health issues or concerns facing your community?"	Elders	Food/Nutrition Advocates	Hispanic	Hmoob	Local Government	Medical Providers	Mom & Child Group	Pride Event	Rural Community	Social Service Providers	Veterans
Access (General)						X		X	X	X	
Access to dental care		X	X							X	
Access to Trans Care								X			
Minoritized Patients – Disparities in access						X					
Healthcare for Homeless Individuals								X		X	
Vaccine Access & Rates					X						X
Medication Access				X						X	X
Affordability			X	X			X	X	X	X	X
Elder Healthcare	X								X	X	
Home Health Care										X	X
Reproductive Care & Education	X		X	X	X			X	X	X	X
Culturally Appropriate Care								X		X	
Lack of Bilingual Providers										X	
Preventive Care			X	X			X	X		X	
Men's Preventive Care	X										
Transportation						X			X	X	X
Insurance Issues								X		X	X
Healthcare Workforce	X	X							X	X	
Broadband & Internet Access	X								X		
Health Information & Education	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X
Communicable Disease			X						X		X
Diabetes			X	X					X	X	
Heart Disease				X						X	
Cancer									X		
High Blood Pressure & Stroke				X			X		X	X	
Chronic Pain			X								
Uncurable Disease									X		
Skin Health			X								
Physical Therapy/Mobility											X
Ambulance Response Time	X								X		

An X means the topic was mentioned and recorded in a focus group. Shading means the topic was not recorded.
Source: GRUW analysis of focus group responses

Social & Economic Issues

Stakeholders in five out of the six counties named social and economic issues as a top priority. Due to differences in prioritization methods, some counties were more specific on the needs than others:

- Buffalo County: Childcare Access
- La Crosse County: Housing and Food Access
- Monroe County: Poverty and Food Access
- Trempealeau County: Food Access
- Vernon County: General Social and Economic Needs

Section 6 of this report covers Social & Economic data. Specific data points supporting this need follow as well as an analysis of disparities in some social and economic community survey responses by income, race, and population density (rural versus urban).

Exhibit 9.12 is a slide from the regional data presentation showing the ALICE survival budget amount and the poverty line for a family of four in each of the Wisconsin counties covered in this report. These amounts are also compared to the Median Household Income for each respective county. While the median household income takes into account all sizes of household, it is a gauge of how close the amount needed to just survive for a family of four is to the median household income.

Exhibit 9.12: ALICE and Household Income Data
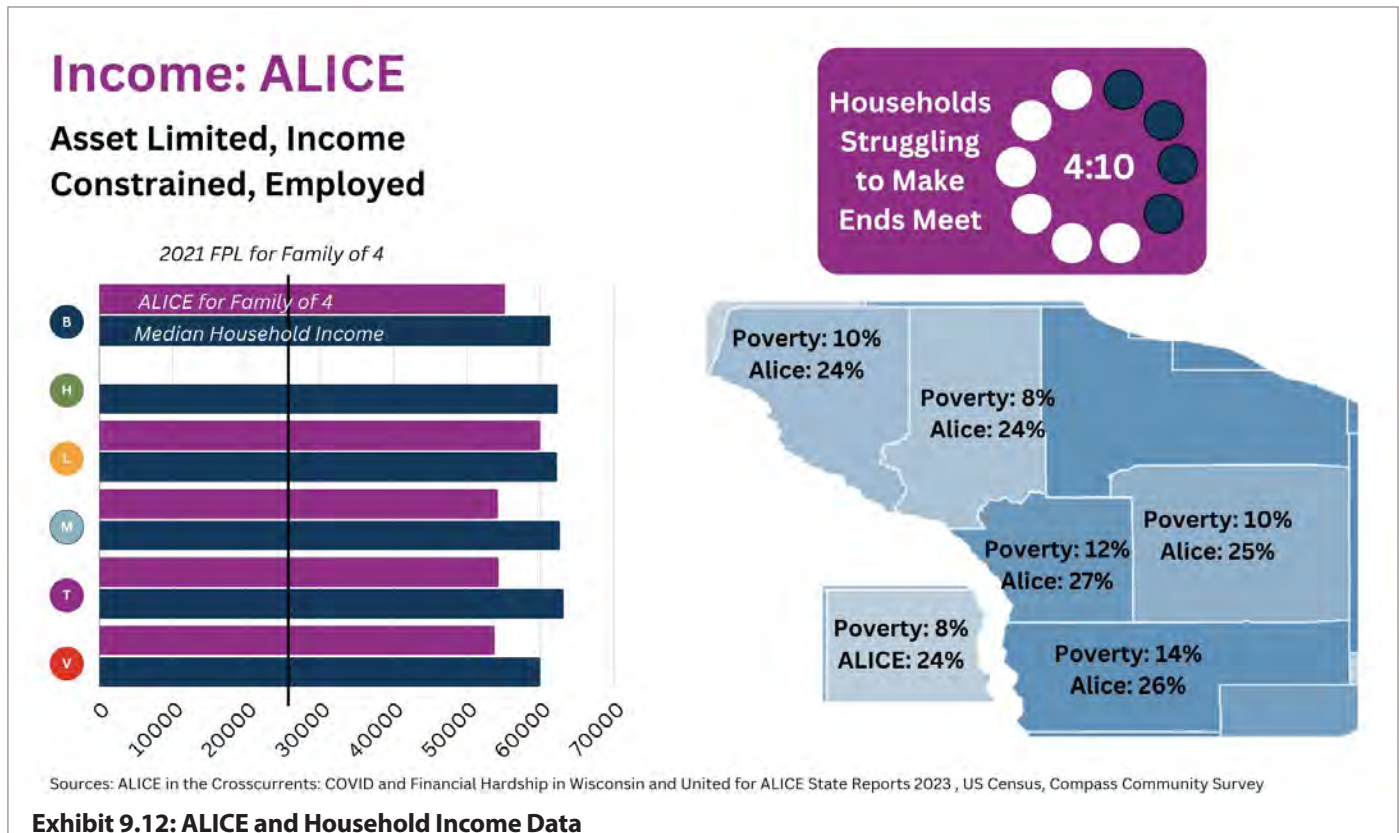
Housing was the #2 reason for calling 211 in 2022 and homelessness was the top ranked concern of La Crosse County survey respondents. The median value of owner-occupied housing units is between $182,900 and $226,600 in the region and has been trending upward. Throughout the region renters are more precariously housed than home owners. **Exhibit 9.13** is a slide from the regional data presentation depicting housing data.

Exhibit 9.13: Housing Data
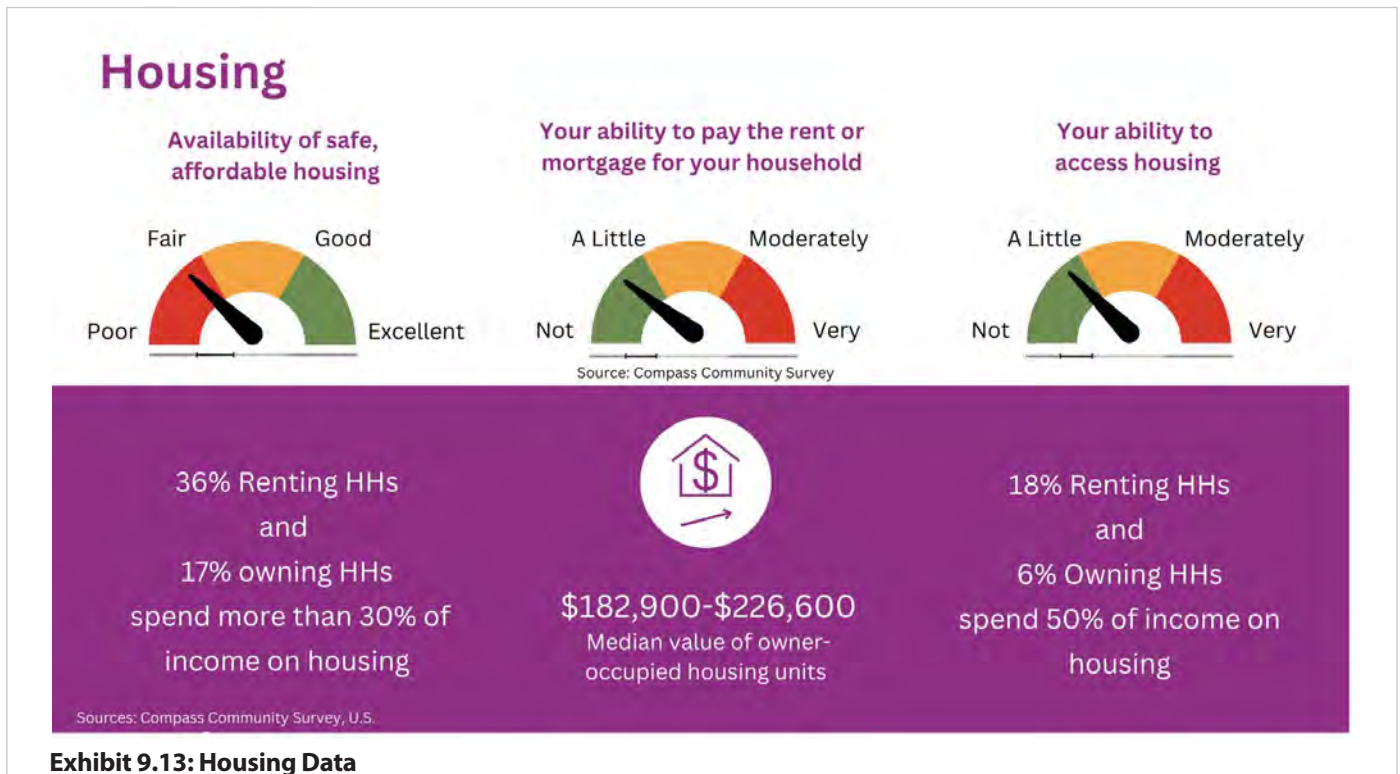
Access to food was a top concern for La Crosse, Monroe, and Trempealeau counties. **Exhibit 9.14** Is from the regional data presentation showing the percent of population with low access to grocery stores as defined by living beyond a ½ mile from a grocery store for urban residents and beyond 10 miles for rural residents. The slide also shows survey respondents reporting food insecurity at least once over the course of a year.

Exhibit 9.14: Housing Data
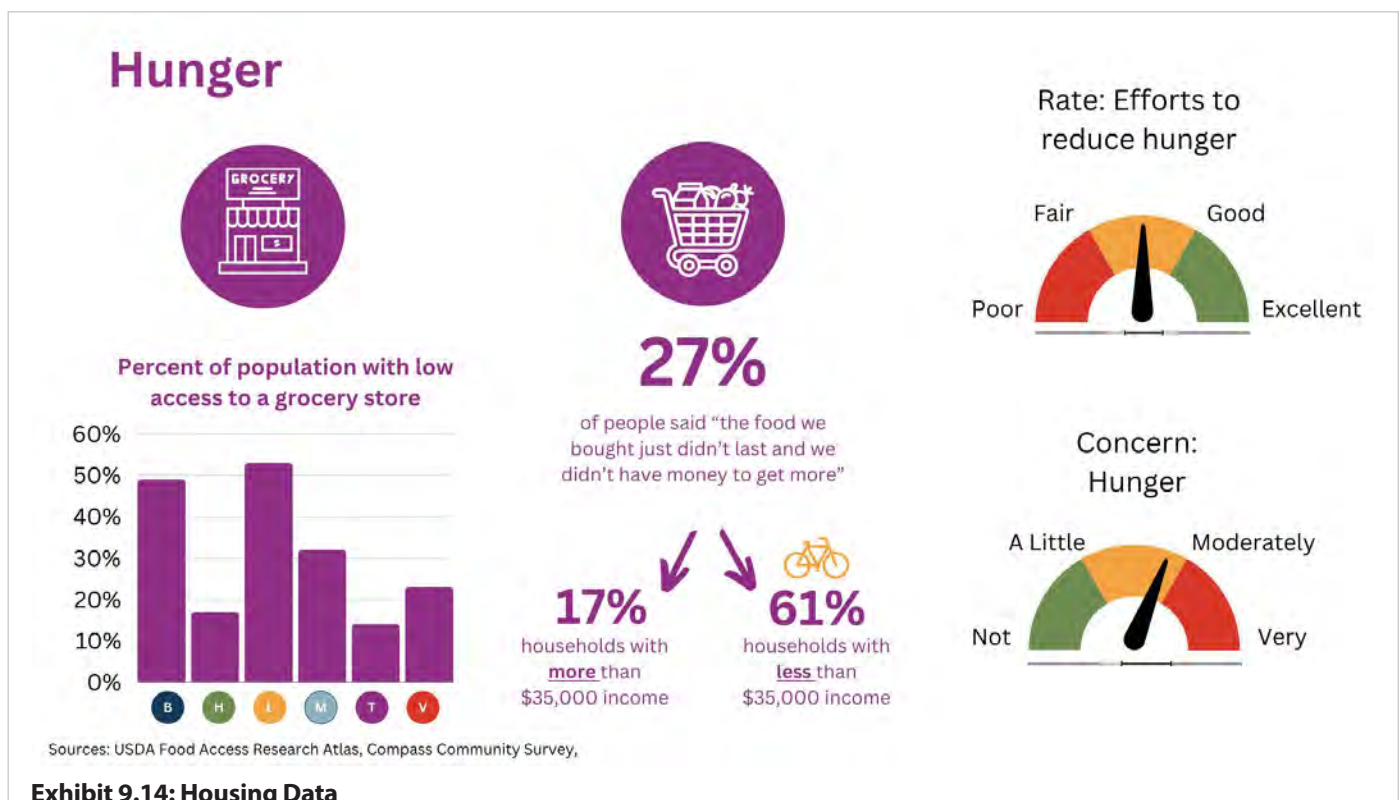
Buffalo County specifically listed childcare as a top priority. We categorized childcare with the social and economic factors due to its impact on parents' ability to work and the high costs. Survey respondents with minor children in the household in all counties expressed a higher level of concern for childcare access than the ability to pay for childcare. **Exhibit 9.15** is a slide from the regional data presentation showing childcare data. The childcare cost burden is the average percent of income it takes to pay for childcare for two children.
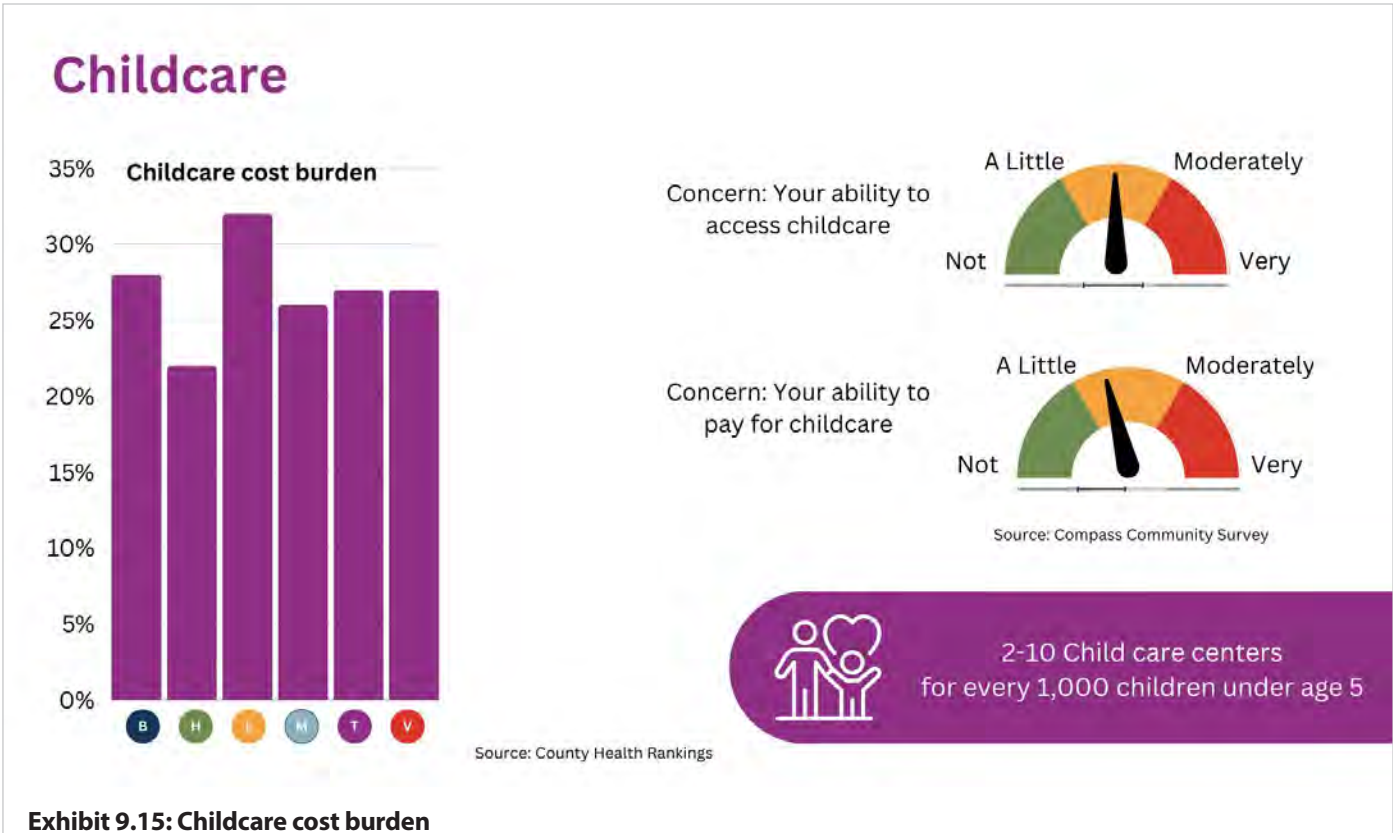
Exhibit 9.15: Childcare cost burden

There were some differences in survey responses based on race and income level. Black, Indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC) and low-income respondents were more likely to have higher levels of concern for their own household's ability to pay for basic needs and housing and access to housing and childcare. There was less difference in level of concern on issues that impact the whole community like poverty, hunger, and wages. For our purposes, we use $35,000 and below as a proxy for low-income. An assessment of rural and urban responses did not show much difference in perception. No tests were conducted to determine if differences between groups are statistically significant. **Exhibit 9.16** shows responses based on income, race, and population density.

Exhibit 9.16
Social & Economic Measures by Income Level, Race, and Population Density

	Overall	Under $35k	$35k & Over	BIPOC	White	Rural	Urban
Very/moderately concerned about meeting household's basic needs	18%	45%	11%	45%	15%	17%	20%
Very/moderately concerned about paying rent/mortgage	20%	49%	12%	53%	16%	20%	20%
Very/moderately concerned about accessing housing	24%	55%	18%	62%	21%	26%	26%
Very/moderately concerned about accessing childcare*	52%	79%	44%	69%	48%	52%	53%
Ran out of food at some time in the last 12 months and did not have money to buy more	27%	61%	17%	63%	22%	28%	26%
Very/moderately concerned about risk of job loss	40%	61%	38%	64%	40%	40%	47%
Very/moderately concerned about poverty	69%	76%	69%	74%	71%	65%	79%
Very/moderately concerned about hunger	63%	73%	62%	64%	64%	57%	74%
Very/moderately concerned about homelessness	66%	75%	65%	75%	66%	52%	88%
Fair/Poor availability of jobs that offer a living wage	65%	69%	66%	67%	66%	71%	60%
Fair/Poor availability of safe affordable housing	79%	74%	83%	65%	83%	78%	84%
Fair/Poor availability of services for people who need extra help	58%	60%	62%	58%	65%	62%	60%
Fair/Poor community efforts to reduce poverty	69%	70%	79%	66%	78%	79%	73%
Fair/Poor community efforts to reduce hunger	46%	52%	47%	53%	48%	53%	42%
Not/a little prepared for job loss	59%	71%	57%	65%	58%	60%	59%

Source: GRUW analysis of community survey data

Social and economic concerns were discussed in focus groups. Group members were asked, "What do you see as the most important health issues or concerns facing your community?" Out of the 334 statements, 169 or 51% were related to social and economic issues. **Exhibit 9.17** shows the categories of focus groups and participants' specific healthcare access concerns.

Exhibit 9.17 Focus Group Responses About Social & Economic Issues

"What do you see as the most important health issues or concerns facing your community?"	Elders	Food/Nutrition Advocates	Hispanic	Hmoob	Local Government	Medical Providers	Mom & Child Group	Pride Event	Rural Community	Social Service Providers	Veterans
Lack of Resources for Financial Assistance						X	X				
Resources for Senior Citizens	X								X		
Language Accessibility				X						X	
Knowledge of Resources			X				X		X	X	X
Housing (General)					X	X		X		X	
Safe and Affordable Housing					X	X		X		X	
Accessible Housing										X	
Homelessness & Unsheltered Population						X		X		X	
Lack of Rural Shelter Options										X	
Food Insecurity	X					X		X	X	X	X
Limited Food Pantry Hours & Accessibility	X								X		
Affordable Bills				X				X		X	
Affordable Broadband & Internet	X								X		
High/Rising Costs			X	X			X			X	
Poverty						X		X		X	
Family Income											X
Livable Wage Jobs										X	
Both parents need to work	X								X		
Workforce – Lack of employees	X								X		
Childcare	X				X				X	X	
Transportation to get to work									X	X	
Education			X	X					X	X	
Racism			X	X						X	
Bullying			X					X			
Family Violence										X	
Domestic Abuse						X				X	
Sexual Assault										X	
Gun Violence											X
Volunteerism	X								X		
Community Spaces	X								X		
Accessibility for Wheelchair Users								X			

An X means the topic was mentioned and recorded in a focus group. Shading means the topic was not recorded.
Source: GRUW analysis of focus group responses

> ❝ Health concerns come second to having enough money to pay for bills.
>
> ~ Quote from Hmoob focus group participant ❞

Nutrition & Physical Activity

Stakeholders in Houston, Trempealeau, and Vernon counties named nutrition and physical activity as a top priority. Due to differences in prioritization methods, some counties were more specific on the needs than others and some issues were identified as separate needs. For the purposes of this report, Nutrition and Physical Activity serves as a broad term with Healthy Eating and Active Living as sub-issues. Concerns regarding general food access were identified in La Crosse, Monroe, and Trempealeau counties and are discussed in the previous section on social and economic issues. Needs identified are as follows:

- Houston County: Active Living and Healthy Eating as separate issues
- Trempealeau County: Nutrition and Access to Food
- Vernon County: Nutrition and Physical Activity

Specific data points supporting this need follow as well as an analysis of disparities in some social and economic community survey responses by income, race, and population density (rural versus urban).

Exhibit 9.18 is a slide from the regional data presentation showing data related to obesity: physical activity, fruit and veggie consumption, access to healthy food, and the relationship of nutrition and physical activity to top causes of death.

Exhibit 9.18: Obesity Slide

There were some differences in survey responses based on race, income level and population density (rural versus urban). Black, Indigenous, and other people of color (BIPOC), low-income, and rural respondents were more likely to rate the community meeting their family's recreational needs as fair or poor. There were similar levels of concern about obesity amongst all groups. Low-income and BIPOC respondents rated their access and ability to pay for healthy food lower than higher income and White respondents. For our purposes, we use $35,000 and below as a proxy for low-income. No tests were conducted to determine if differences between groups are statistically significant. **Exhibit 9.19** shows responses based on income, race, and population density.

Exhibit 9.19
Nutrition & Physical Activity Measures by Income Level, Race, and Population Density

	Overall	Under $35k	$35k & Over	BIPOC	White	Rural	Urban
Fair/poor rating for community meeting your family's recreational needs	36%	41%	34%	47%	35%	48%	20%
Very/moderately concerned about obesity	74%	72%	76%	78%	75%	76%	74%
Fair/poor access to healthy food	21%	39%	16%	44%	18%	22%	19%
Fair/poor ability to pay for healthy food	28%	51%	23%	55%	26%	30%	28%

Source: GRUW analysis of community survey data

Food access, nutrition, and physical activity were discussed in focus groups. Group members were asked, "What do you see as the most important health issues or concerns facing your community?" Exhibit 9.20 shows the categories of focus groups and participants' specific nutrition and physical activity concerns.

Exhibit 9.20 Focus Group Responses About Nutrition & Physical Activity

"What do you see as the most important health issues or concerns facing your community?"	Elders	Food/Nutrition Advocates	Hispanic	Hmoob	Local Government	Medical Providers	Mom & Child Group	Pride Event	Rural Community	Social Service Providers	Veterans
Access to Food/Hunger	X					X		X	X	X	
Mobile Food Pantry	X								X		
Food Pantry Hours	X		X						X		
Food Pantry Volunteers	X								X		
Access to Healthy Food/Nutrition		X				X		X		X	
Life Skills/Cooking			X	X						X	X
Diet & Overweight/Obese		X					X	X		X	
Physical Activity						X		X			

An X means the topic was mentioned and recorded in a focus group. Shading means the topic was not recorded.
Source: GRUW analysis of focus group responses

Substance Use

Stakeholders in La Crosse, Monroe, and Trempealeau counties identified substance use as a priority issue. Stakeholders specifically cited access to care for substance use disorder treatment as a need in the community.

Section 4 of this report covers Health Behaviors & Concerns which includes data on alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drug use. Specific data points supporting this need follow as well as an analysis of disparities in some social and economic community survey responses by income, race, and population density (rural versus urban).

Exhibit 9.21 is a slide from the regional data presentation showing data related to youth marijuana use and prescription drug misuse; overdose deaths, and level of concern of survey respondents.

Exhibit 9.21: Substance Use Slide
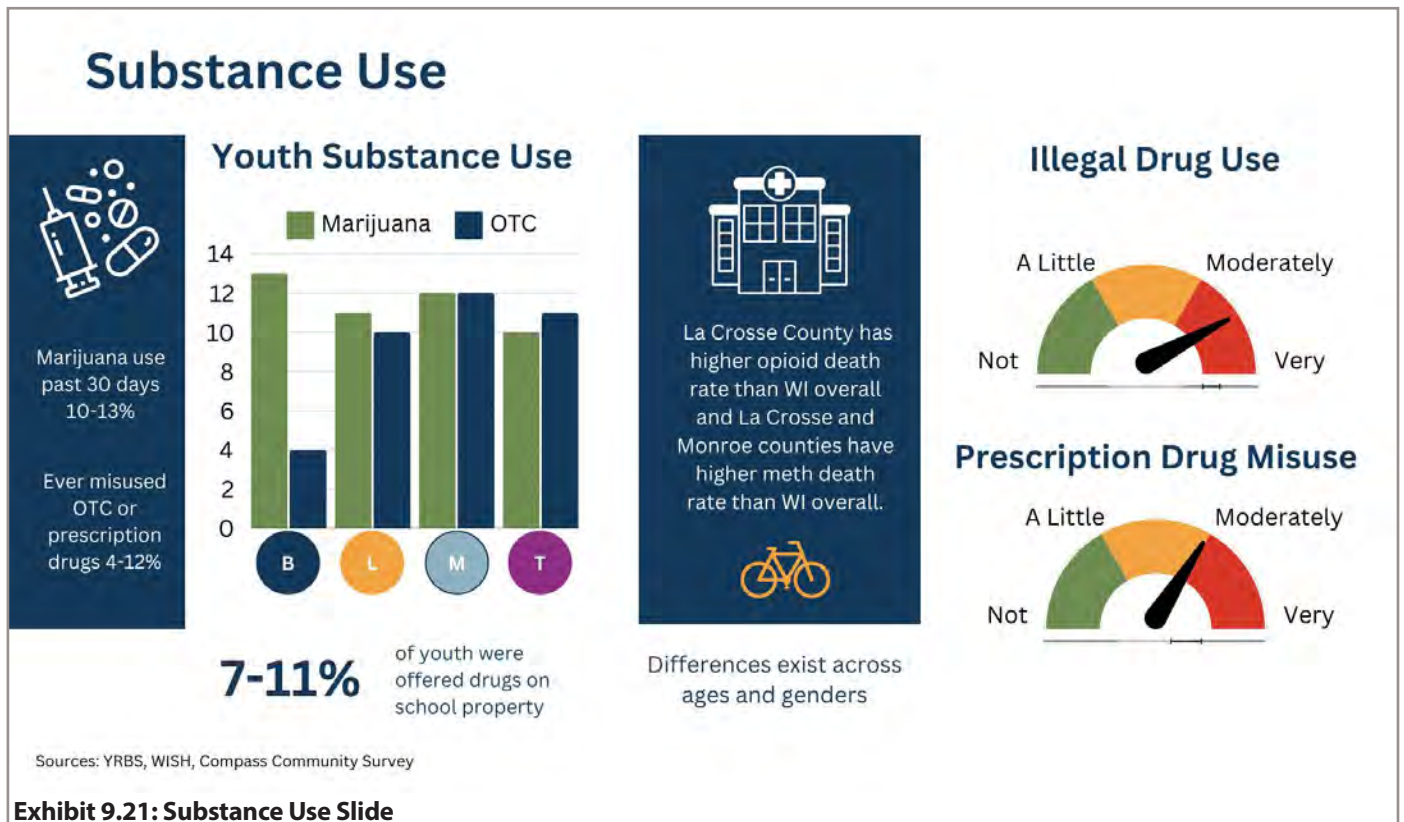
Exhibits 9.22 and **9.23** are slides from the regional data presentation showing data related to alcohol outlet density, alcohol use amongst adults and youth, impact of chronic alcohol use, driving deaths, and causes of death related to alcohol use.


Exhibit 9.22: Alcohol Use Slide 1

Exhibit 9.23: Alcohol Use Slide 2
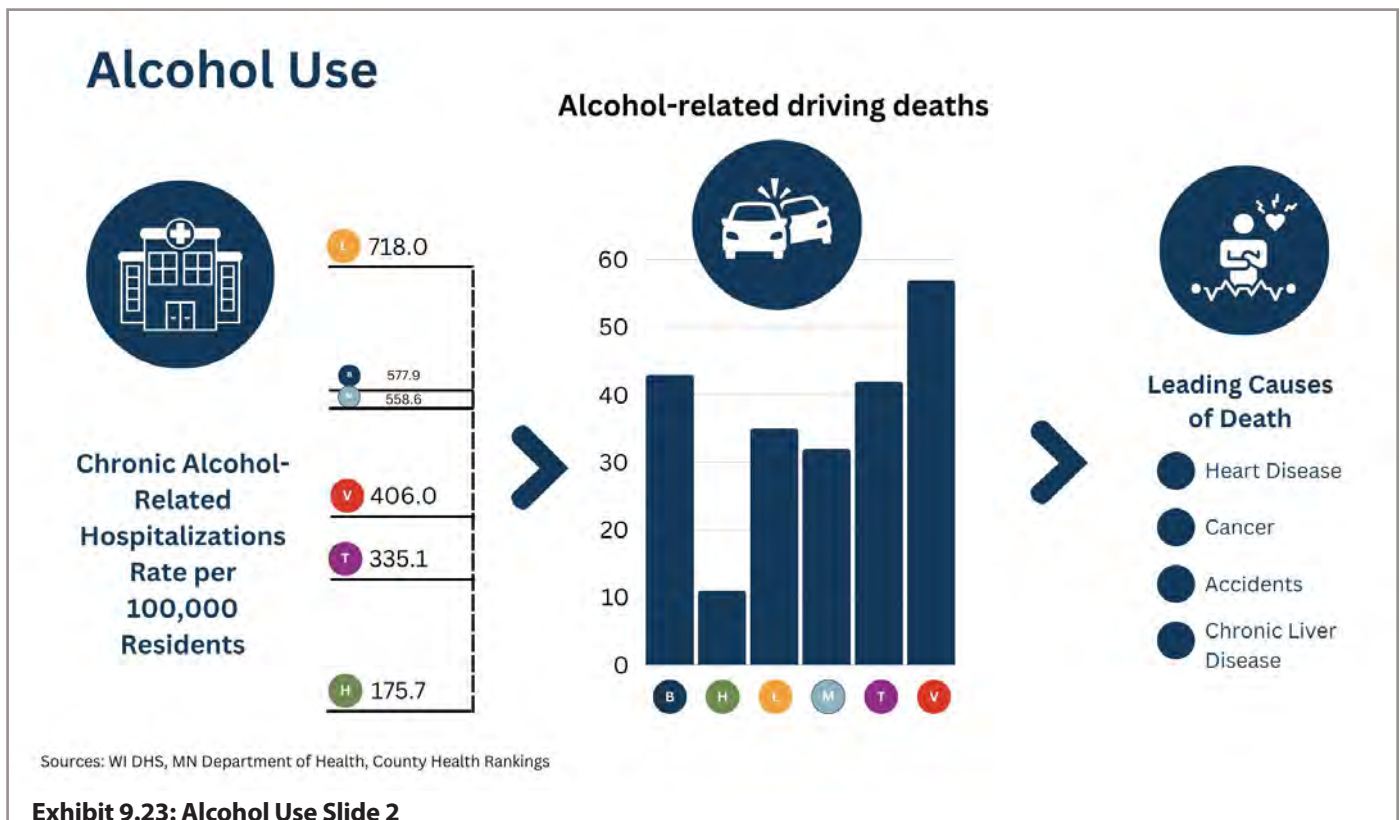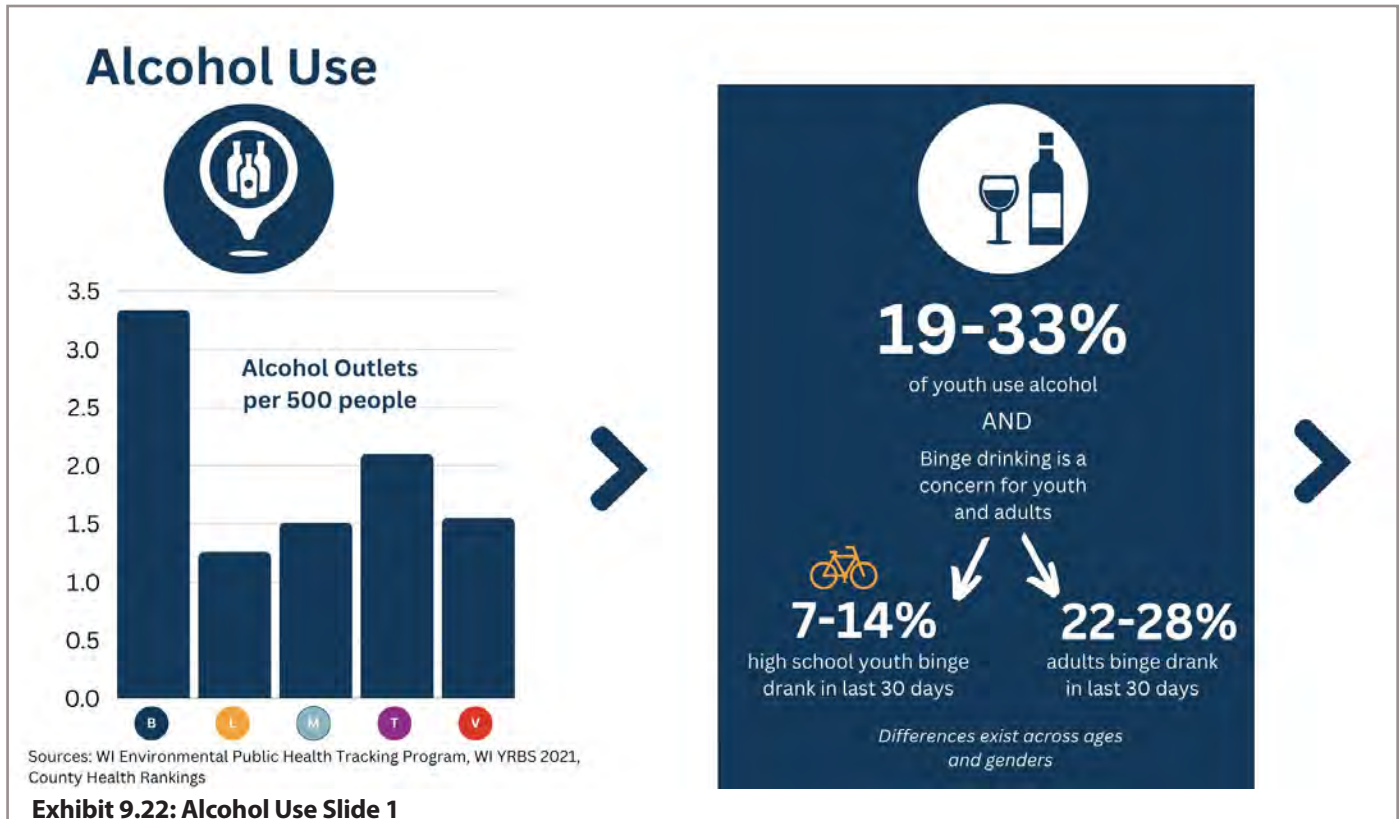
Exhibit 9.24 is a slide from the regional data presentation showing data related to tobacco and e-cigarette use among youth, adult smoking rates, concerns about tobacco and e-cigarettes, and the leading causes of death associated with smoking and tobacco use. Consistently we see a higher level of concern for e-cigarettes and vaping over traditional tobacco cigarette use.

Exhibit 9.24: Tobacco & E-Cigarettes Slide
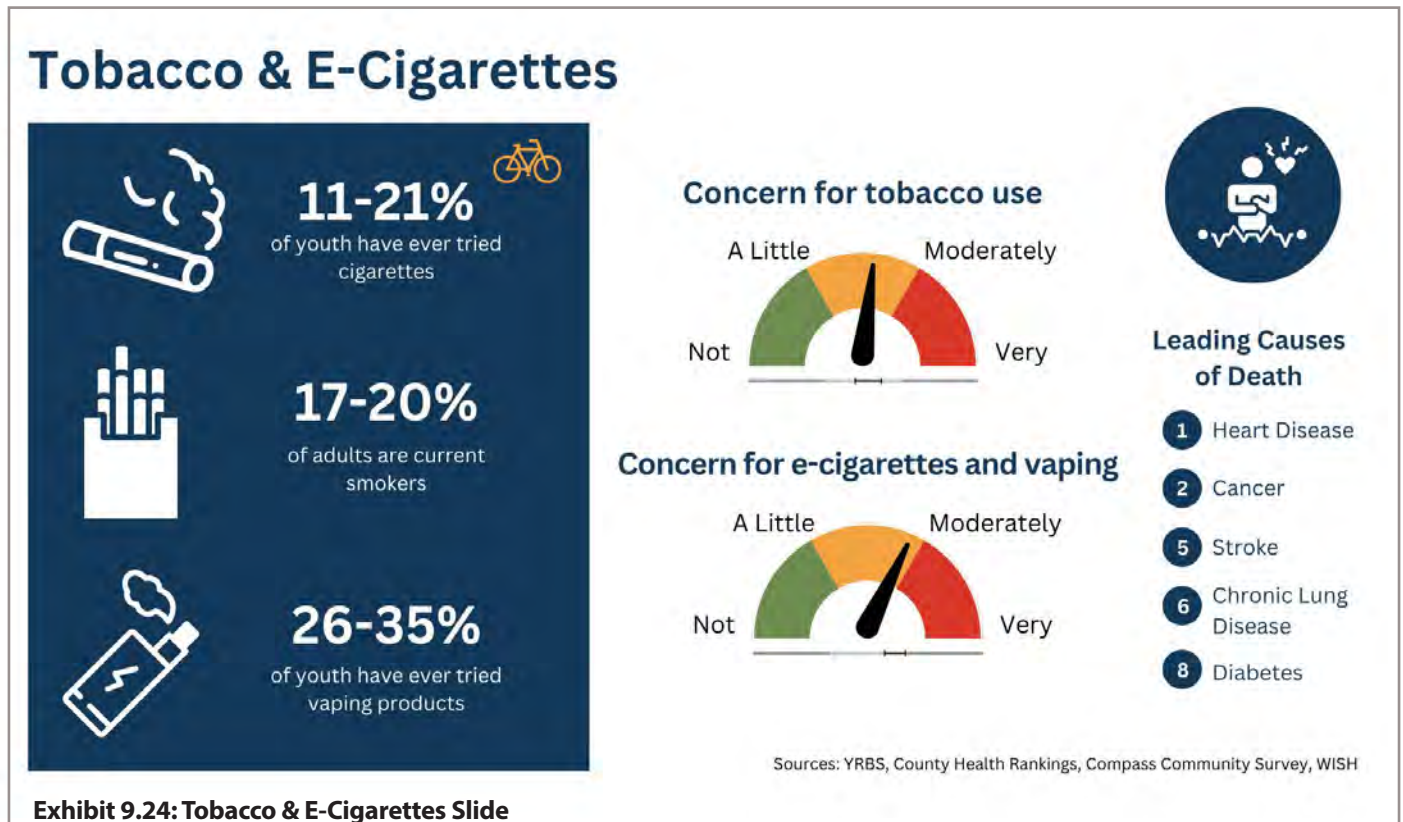
There were few differences in survey responses based on race, income level and population density (rural versus urban). Of note, all questions related to substance use asked for the respondent's level of concern. Meaning the majority of all respondents were very or moderately concerned about each of the issues below. For our purposes, we use $35,000 and below as a proxy for low-income. No tests were conducted to determine if differences between groups are statistically significant. **Exhibit 9.25** shows responses based on income, race, and population density.

Exhibit 9.25
Substance Use Concern by Income Level, Race, and Population Density

	Overall	Under $35k	$35k & Over	BIPOC	White	Rural	Urban
Very/moderately concerned about alcohol use	78%	82%	79%	83%	79%	75%	84%
Very/moderately concerned about prescription drug misuse	69%	74%	71%	76%	71%	67%	76%
Very/moderately concerned about tobacco use	53%	60%	53%	64%	53%	56%	52%
Very/moderately concerned about e-cigarette use/vaping	65%	63%	68%	68%	67%	67%	66%
Very/moderately concerned about illegal drug use	85%	84%	88%	87%	87%	84%	90%

Source: GRUW analysis of community survey data

Substance use and treatment options were discussed in focus groups. Group members were asked, "What do you see as the most important health issues or concerns facing your community?" **Exhibit 9.26** shows the categories of focus groups and participants' specific substance use concerns.

Exhibit 9.26 Focus Group Responses About Substance Use

"What do you see as the most important health issues or concerns facing your community?"	Elders	Food/Nutrition Advocates	Hispanic	Hmoob	Local Government	Medical Providers	Mom & Child Group	Pride Event	Rural Community	Social Service Providers	Veterans
Addiction/AODA			X	X		X		X		X	X
Lack of and access to treatment programs						X		X		X	
Opioid use/alternatives						X					X
Fentanyl										X	
Overdose						X					
Drug Epidemic											X
Alcoholism			X								
Vaping			X			X					
Lack of resources						X					

An X means the topic was mentioned and recorded in a focus group. Shading means the topic was not recorded.
Source: GRUW analysis of focus group responses

Community Assets

An important step in addressing community needs is identifying community assets. Each county went through a process of identifying community assets that could be leveraged to help address the community's top needs. Below is a list of each county's process and identified assets. These lists are a starting point and not exhaustive.

Buffalo County

Buffalo County Health Department staff met after the stakeholder meeting to identify community assets that could be leveraged to address the community's top needs:

- ADRC
- Alma Library
- Alma School District
- Buffalo County Sherrif's Department
- Buffalo County Health Department
- Buffalo County Health
- and Human Services
- Buffalo County Partnership Council
- CFC School District
- Churches
- Fountain City Police Department
- Gilmanton School District
- Gunderson Healthcare System
- Hope4U Organization
- Mayo Healthcare System
- Mondovi Library
- Mondovi Police Department
- Mondovi School District
- UW-Extension
- WIC Program

Houston County

Houston County Public Health Department staff and key community stakeholders met after the stakeholder meeting to identify community assets that could be leveraged to address the community's top needs:

- SEMCAC- Caledonia
- SEMCAC Head Start
- Senior dining services
- Caledonia Area Chamber of Commerce
- La Crescent Area Chamber of Commerce
- Houston Area Chamber of Commerce
- Spring Grove Area Chamber of Commerce
- Lions Clubs
- Neighbors in Action
- La Crescent Police Department
- Caledonia Police Department
- Houston Police Department
- Houston County Sheriff's Department
- Local EMS and Fire Departments
- Tri-State Ambulance
- Bluff Country Family Resources
- Hiawatha Valley Mental Health Center
- Help me Connect
- MN WIC Program
- Safe Routes to School
- Farm to School program
- University Minnesota Extension
- Houston County Dental Collaborative
- Delta Dental of Minnesota
- Rolling Hills Public Transit
- Apple Express
- Great Rivers 211
- Houston County Food shelves
- Lunch Wagon
- Bluff Country Collaborative
- Churches
- Birth to Three services
- Gundersen Satellite clinics
- Mayo Satellite clinics
- Soil and Water Conservation District
- Early Childhood Family Education programs
- Community gardens
- City parks
- Bike paths

La Crosse County

Participants at the La Crosse County Stakeholder Meetings were asked to identify community assets to leverage when working towards solutions. The following are organizations, groups, and characteristics identified as community assets:

- 1000 Friends of Wisconsin
- 4H Clubs
- AARP Wisconsin
- Adaptive recreation
- Adult and Teen Challenge
- Aging & Disability Resource Center
- Alliance to Heal
- Altra
- Area Health Education Center (AHEC)
- Better Together
- Birth to Three Services
- Boys and Girls Clubs
- CASA for Kids
- Catholic Charities
- Children's Long Term Support (CLTS)
- Churches
- City of La Crosse Zoning
- City/County Homeless Action Plan
- Colleges – student experience
- Community Collaboration
- Community Dental Care Coordinator
- Community Health Centers
- Community Health Workers
- Community Link
- Compass
- Comprehensive Community Services (CCS)
- Coulee Recovery Center
- Couleecap
- Crisis Team
- Diaper Bank
- Drug drop boxes
- Falls Prevention Coalition
- Family and Children's Center
- Farm to Early Childcare Education
- Findhelp
- Food Pantries
- Free clinics
- Gateway Scouting
- Generous donors
- Great Rivers 211
- Great Rivers United Way
- GROW La Crosse
- Gundersen Behavior Health
- Gundersen car seat safety checks
- Gundersen Community Health Workers

- Gundersen Community Paramedics
- Gundersen Community Resource Connectors
- Gundersen Domestic Violence Service
- Gundersen Envision
- Gundersen Health System
- Gundersen parenting programs
- Gundersen Social Services
- Gundersen Stepping Out in Pink
- Gundersen Tobacco Cessation
- Gundersen Trauma and Injury Prevention
- Gundersen Wellness Coaching
- Hamilton Elementary
- Harm Reduction Resources
- Health Science Consortium
- Healthy Families – Family and Children's Center
- Hmoob Cultural and Community Agency
- Homeless Collaborative
- Hope Restores
- Hunger Task Force
- ICE House
- Independent Living Resources
- Karuna
- La Crosse Chamber of Commerce
- La Crosse County Board
- La Crosse County Health Department
- La Crosse County Human Services
- La Crosse County Mental Health Coalition
- La Crosse Fire Department

- La Crosse Police
- La Crosse School District
- La Crosse Smiles
- Land use planning
- Local businesses
- Local leader engagement
- Local schools
- Marine Credit Union Finding Home Program
- Mayo Clinic Health System
- Mayo Clinic Health System - Healthy Start for Mom and Baby
- Mayo Clinic Health System - Infant CPR
- Mayo Clinic Health System - Beginning to Breastfeed
- Mayo Clinic Health System - Health Education
- Mayo Clinic Health System - Skilled Nursing Services
- Mayo Clinic Health System - In-Home Hospice
- Mayo Clinic Health System - Safe Path
- Mayo Clinic Health System - Nurse Line
- Mayo Clinic Health System - Medication Disposal
- Mayo Clinic Health System - Mental Health Evaluation/Assessments/ Screening
- Mayo Clinic Health System - Mental Health/ Counseling Services
- Mayo Clinic Health System - Assessment for Substance Use Disorders
- Mayo Clinic Health System - Outpatient Psychiatric Services

- Mayo Clinic Health System - Senior Services
- Medical community
- Minutes in Motion
- Nature
- Nature sports
- Neighborhood associations
- Neighborhood Family Clinic
- New Horizons
- Non-profits
- North American Squirrel Association (NASA)
- Parenting Place
- Population health
- Preventive care testing
- REACH Center
- Relationships and relationship building
- Rotary Clubs
- RSVP
- Rugs for Mugs
- Safe Families for Children
- Safe Kids Coalition
- Salvation Army
- Scenic Bluffs Dental
- Scenic Bluffs Health Center
- Scenic Bluffs Mental Health
- Seal-A-Smile
- Senior low-income housing
- Service clubs
- Sharps drop boxes
- Shelby Youth Baseball
- Sleep in Heavenly Peace
- SMRT Bus
- St Clare Health Mission
- St Clare Rotary Mobile Health Unit
- Street Med Team
- Strive2Thrive
- Students (University and Technical)
- The Little Heart Project
- The Nature Place

- Tri State Ambulance
- United Way Partner Organizations
- University of Wisconsin La Crosse
- UWL Student Wellness
- Vaccines
- VARC
- Viaro
- Viterbo
- Volunteers
- WAFER
- Western Technical College of Wisconsin
- Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- YIMBY (Yes In My Back Yard)
- YMCA Healthy Living Center
- YMCA Teen Center
- Youth Organizations
- YWCA

Monroe County

Participants at the Monroe County Stakeholder Meetings were asked to identify community assets to leverage when working towards solutions. The following are organizations, groups, and characteristics identified as community assets:

- 211
- ADRC
- Boys and Girls Club
- Brighter Tomorrows
- Community partners
- Monroe County Safe Community Coalition
- Monroe County Mental
- Health Coalition
- Monroe County Suicide Prevention Taskforce
- Monroe County Nutrition Coalition
- County Services
- EMS
- Food Pantries
- Healthcare Systems
- Health and Human Services
- Law Enforcement
- Libraries
- Local Businesses
- Local Health Department
- Parks
- Schools
- Together with Veterans
- UW Extension
- WIC

Trempealeau County

Participants at the Trempealeau County Stakeholder Meetings were asked to identify community assets to leverage when working towards solutions. The following are organizations, groups, and characteristics identified as community assets:

- ADRC
- Public Health
- Local Health Department
- Schools
- Law enforcement
- School police liaisons
- Healthcare systems
- Food Pantries
- Collaborative group involvement to focus on a specific action
- County resources & programs
- Hospital support
- People who care- we need to get coalitions of people with a vested interest from multiple sectors to make incremental change together
- Resource guide / 211
- Social Services
- Large employers could contribute if the county reached out to them
- WIC program
- Social groups such as Lions Club
- Medical Facilities
- Access to information
- Western Dairyland's Housing & Employment Programs

Vernon County

Participants at the Vernon County Stakeholder Meetings were asked to identify community assets to leverage when working towards solutions. The following are organizations, groups, and characteristics identified as community assets:

- 211
- Clinics
- Churches
- ADRC
- Hospitals
- Community minded folks
- Lots of providers
- Schools
- Childcare
- Park and Rec
- Leaders
- UW-Madison Extension
- Community Organizations
- Real Estate to Invest
- Libraries
- Parks
- Viroqua Schools
- Education
- DHS
- EMS
- Community partners
- VMH
- Gundersen St. Joes
- WDRT
- Nurse Advisory Line
- Community Room
- Health Screenings
- Behavioral Health
- Willingness to get involved
- Business variety
- Strong schools

Appendix A - Data Sources

Community Demographics **(Sections 1, 2, and 6)**	• Community Health Solutions analysis of demographic estimates (2023) and population projections (2028) from ESRI.
County Health Rankings **(Sections 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7)**	• University of Wisconsin-Madison Population Health Institute. County Health Rankings. Retrieved in July 2023 from http://www.countyhealthrankings.org: • Full Rankings for Wisconsin • Full Rankings for Minnesota • County Health Rankings Model • Measures and Data Sources
Leading Causes of Death **(Section 3)**	• Wisconsin Dept. of Health Services, Division of Public Health, Office of Health Informatics. Wisconsin Interactive Statistics on Health (WISH) data query system (2021 data) • 2020 Minnesota Department of Health County Health Tables
Maternal and Infant Health **(Section 3)**	• Wisconsin Dept. of Health Services, Division of Public Health, Office of Health Informatics. Wisconsin Interactive Statistics on Health (WISH) data query system • 2020 Minnesota Department of Health County Health Tables
Cancer Screening Rates **(Section 5)**	• Wisconsin data from Wisconsin Cancer Collaborative, Interactive County Cancer Data Dashboard. • Minnesota data from National Cancer Institute State Cancer Profiles
Youth Risk Profile **(Section 4)**	• Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, County-Level Youth Risk Behavior Survey Reports, 2020-2021 School Year • Minnesota Student Survey County Tables, 2021-22 School Year, Minnesota Student Survey Interagency Team: Minnesota Department of Education Minnesota Department of Health Minnesota Department of Human Services Minnesota Department of Public Safety
ALICE Households **(Section 6)**	• United for ALICE National Research Center, Accessed September 2023.
Child Services Cases **(Section 6)**	• Wisconsin Child Abuse and Neglect Report Annual Report for Calendar Year 2021 to the Governor and Legislature Wis. Stat. s. 48.47(8). Also, Wisconsin Department of Children and Families Out-of-Home Care (Otte) Dashboard. • CPS Referrals and Child Abuse Cases for Minnesota were not included in this report as definitions for cases and referrals in Minnesota may vary from Wisconsin definitions. • For more information on Minnesota Maltreatment data, visit https://mn.gov/dhs/partners-and-providers/edocs/child-protection-foster-care-adoption/
Community Survey **(Sections 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8)**	• Community Health Solutions analysis of survey responses submitted by community residents in June – September, 2023. Raw survey data provided to Great Rivers United Way under separate cover.
Community Insight Events **(Section 8)**	• Community Health Solutions analysis of themes emerging from participant statements captured at community insight events. Original statements provided to Great Rivers United Way under separate cover.

2024 COMPASS NOW

NAVIGATING TOWARD STRONGER COMMUNITIES

United Way

Great Rivers United Way

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